

HOPES & FEARS

(WHEN, WHERE AND WHAT ABOUT CABINET
DELEGATION'S WORK IN INDIA)

By

A NOTED JOURNALIST

(WHO MET AND TALKED TO DELEGATION MEMBERS
AND INDIAN PARTY LEADERS)

Foreword By

DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

Sole Distributors :—

THE BANKING EXPERTS, DELHI

Dear Readers,

Four months ago, on February 20, I read, like all of you, that a British Cabinet Delegation was soon coming out to India to return to this unhappy land her long-denied treasure—*independence*. I felt happy, but, maybe, like you, was suspicious. Had the inherent strength of India's national movement and the force of circumstances compelled the British Government finally to liquidate their Imperial hold on our dear Motherland? Or was it just another ruse, an old dirty Tory trick, a propaganda stunt and all that?

I determined to keep a diary in which I would record all the essential facts connected with the events that would follow. And I kept the promise, though my many engagements would frequently leave me free late at night. I maintained the diary, but failed to efface through its pages the self, the personal feelings and reaction to the events as they occurred. But, perhaps, that is the main strength of this work. While you read through its pages you feel they were penned by you, because they record your own feelings and reactions, your hopes and fears, as they do mine.

You may ask me the reason of not revealing my identity. My fear is of losing valuable friendships, of those who told me facts in confidence which they never thought would at any time smell the printer's ink.

Author

Printed by Mr. A. C. Jain at the Rajhans Press, Delhi, and Published
by the Dhara Publications, Delhi, for The Banking Experts Delhi

All rights reserved with The Banking Experts, Delhi.

FOREWORD

The annals of today constitute the basis for the history of tomorrow. The history of today was the politics of yesterday. These annals and politics constitute the material for the research which produces the real history of a period. But people cannot wait till the historian shifts the material and produces his own reading of past events, till he is able to read the philosophy of history and present it as his own interpretation of human progress. 'A history of our own times' is a cry that is on everyone's lips and constitutes real need of the day. But that would be history in a hurry.

The young author lays no pretensions to his little brochure being a history—whether written in a hurry or at leisure. He is a journalist and this work of his is only journalism which, as Walter Elliot has said, is not literature, much less history, and that is its justification and strength. It is a contemporary record. Its awareness of the future is that of men and women of its time, neither more nor less. It is doubtless hard to see the present focus, but it is admitted that the old idea of waiting for 20 years is regarded as unsound, for you can see the truth easier now than later, provided you can get at essential facts.

It is these essential facts that the author has given chronologically, rather than logically or psychologically. They are otherwise apt to be consigned to and lost in the limbo of oblivion. They provide the real background for the kaleidoscopic changes that have occurred from day to day these three months, at the end of which one is apt in judging those changes to lose all time relationship and all connection of cause and effect.

—indeed all sense of proportion and perspective. The essential facts narrated here are the foundations for the science as well as the philosophy of History.

When weeks and months have passed in appraising offers or arriving at decisions, one party is apt to be blamed for the long and inevitable delays in the development of politics and the blame in this behalf is apt to be laid at the party's door unjustifiably. The cumulative effect of what might appear to a detached judge as a series of frivolous procrastinations can effectively be neutralized by a parallel publication of the essential facts known only to the members of the Working Committee of the Congress Party who possess an inside knowledge of the day-to-day developments. Issues like grouping ; the European members' part and place in the Indian Constituent Assembly ; the States people and their representation on it ; parity, its scope, meaning and effect ; the National Provisional Government, as opposed to the loose phraseology of 'Interim Government,' its scope, powers and composition and above all its strength ; the omission to consult parties in fixing an official belonging to a minority community as a member ; the inclusion of a Nationalist or Congress Mussalman in the composition ; all these are issues that have engaged alike public interest and the Committee's attention from day to day or even week to week. It would, therefore, be necessary to read the connected documents side by side with the Press reports in order to have a correct idea of those ever-recurring ups and downs in public feelings. Gandhiji's post-prayer talks were highly helpful to the tutored politician as well as to the unsophisticated well-masses, despite the fact that they were cryptic and mystifying at times. If they too had been published in this brochure, they would have made a rich addition to the literature as well as a valuable commentary on the events of the day.

For a space of full three months people have been now buoyed up with exultation and now laid low in spirits over the ever-changing events. When you fly in the aeroplane, your heart heaves up as the plane rises a thousand feet and your head sinks low as it descends a thousand feet. The same feeling of *chadav* and *uttar* is experienced by one bathing in the sea, as one is shot up on to the crest of the wave and swept down into its trough. Such have been the experiences equally of the people at large, and of the characters that have taken an intimate part in the drama. For sixty years this drama has been enacted in Indian public life. The scenes shifted, the music altered, the curtains rose and fell, the lights were now off and now on, the characters themselves came and went, but the drama remained the same—of an ancient people once exalted in culture, later becoming subservient and enslaved, and now struggling to emancipate their motherland and making themselves free. The story of such a strife and struggle is of perennial interest like those other stories in history of the Exodus of the Israelites from the kingdom of the Pharaohs to the land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey and of the Revolt of the Tartars which De Quincey has immortalized in English Literature. India too has fought and fought and the story of her exploits, the latest of which is the theme of this publication, will be found to carry abiding and sustained interest to the Indian citizens, politicians and publicmen.

5, Keeling Road, }
 NEW DELHI, }
 20—6—46

B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya

AREA AND POPULATION (1941 CENSUS)

INDIA: TOTAL POPULATION—388,997,955: TOTAL AREA—1,581,410 sq. miles.
 BRITISH INDIA (including Centrally-administered areas):
 TOTAL POPULATION—295,808,722: TOTAL AREA—865,446 sq. miles.

Province	Area in Sq. Miles	Total Population	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION OF PROVINCE				
			Hindus including Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Castes	Muslims	Sikhs	Indian Christians
Assam	54,951	10,204,733	41.29	6.6	33.73	.03	.37
Bengal	77,442	60,306,525	41.55	12.2	54.73	.03	.18
Bihar	69,745	36,340,151	72.96	11.9	12.98	.04	.063
Bombay	76,443	20,849,840	79.40	8.9	9.21	.04	1.6
C. P. & Berar	98,575	16,813,584	76.92	18.1	4.66	.09	.29
Madras	126,166	49,341,810	86.74	16.4	7.9	...	4.05
N. W. P. P.	14,263	3,038,067	5.94	...	91.79	1.91	.18
Orissa	32,198	8,728,544	78.28	14.2	1.68	...	.3
Punjab	99,089	28,418,819	26.57	4.4	57.07	13.22	1.7
Sind	48,136	4,535,008	27.12	4.2	70.75	.68	.29
United Provinces	109,247	55,920,617	83.26	21.3	15.30	.42	.24
Hyderabad	54,456	502,000	8.89	...	87.5	1.91	1.2

Ajmer-Merwara...	2,400	584,000	64.5	...	15.4	2.38	.99
Coorg	1,593	169,000	77.49	...	8.73	.15	.04
Delhi	574	917,000	61.79	...	33.22	1.76	1.31
Andamans and Nicobars	3,143	34,000	24.96	...	23.7	2.2	7.74
States & Agencies			70.57	...	13.93	1.38	3.12
Assam	...	...	45.16	...	4.36	.05	...
Baluchistan	...	...	2.74	...	97.21	.04	.01
Barda	...	...	89.85	...	7.83	.2	.33
Bengal	...	...	47.22	...	17.35	...	.03
Central India	...	...	78.05	...	5.86	.04	.13
Cochin	...	...	63.04	...	7.67	...	28.79
Deccan	...	...	89.47	...	6.54	...	.63
Gujerat	...	...	52.28	...	3.98	.01	.29
Gwalior	...	...	86.45	...	6.01	.06	.04
Hyderabad	...	...	81.47	...	12.84	.03	1.35
Kashmir	...	...	20.08	...	77.12	1.64	.09
Mysore	...	...	91.23	...	6.62	...	1.54
N. W. F. P.	...	...	37.41	...	47.7	9.67	5.21
Punjab	...	...	33.72	...	40.91	24.4	.13
Rajputana	...	...	75.4	...	9.49	...	.04
U. P.	...	...	81.37	...	29.47	.08	.36

PROVINCIAL POPULATIONS DISTRICT-WISE

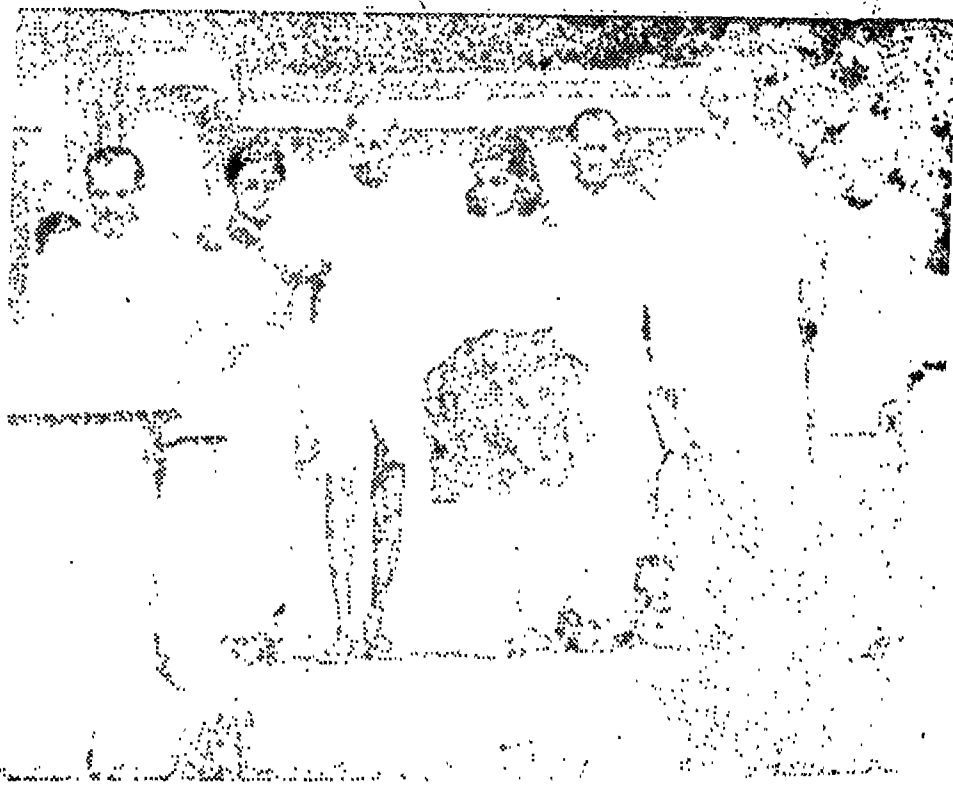
	Hindus	Muslims	Sikhs
PUNJAB—Muslim majority	414,670	4,020,141	231,071
Rawalpindi Dn.	(8.82)	(85.52)	(4.98)
Multan Dn.	884,335	4,801,565	518,623
	(13.89)	(75.43)	(8.15)
Lahore Dn., excluding Amritsar	984,284	3,541,963	931,161
<i>Non-Muslim majority</i>	(16.96)	(61.02)	(16.01)
Ambala Dn.	3,099,483	1,318,136	240,296
	(66.01)	(28.07)	(5.12)
Jullundur Dn.	1,950,802	1,877,742	1,322,405
	(35.87)	(34.53)	(24.31)
Amritsar District	216,778	657,695	510,815
	(15.33)	(46.52)	(36.13)
BENGAL—Muslim majority	657,950	1,078,007	
Nadia	(37.38)	(61.26)	
Murshidabad	684,987	927,747	
	(41.75)	(56.55)	
Jessore	721,079	1,100,713	
	(39.44)	(60.21)	
Rajshahi Dn., excluding	2,943,666	7,267,532	
Darjeeling and Jalpaigiri	(27.84)	(68.72)	
Dacca Dn.	4,621,637	11,044,172	
	(27.7)	(71.59)	
Chittagong Dn.	1,755,176	6,392,291	
<i>Hindu majority</i>	(20.7)	(75.4)	
Burdwan Dn.	8,125,185	1,429,500	
	(78.98)	(13.9)	
24 Parganas	2,369,996	1,148,180	
	(65.32)	(32.47)	
Calcutta	1,531,512	497,535	
	(72.62)	(23.59)	
Khulna	977,693	959,172	
	(59.31)	(49.36)	
Jalpaigiri	551,647	251,460	
	(59.63)	(23.04)	
Darjeeling	178,496	9,125	141,500
	(47.43)	(2.42)	(37.34)
ASSAM—Muslim majority	1,149,514	1,892,117	
Sylhet	(36.88)	(61.71)	
<i>Hindu majority</i> Whole Assam,	13,093,709	1,559,562	2,415,000
excluding Sylhet	(43.22)	(21.87)	(21.07)

They admire each other...



Lord Pethick-Lawrence with Gandhi

At the Bhangi Colony



From left to right : Gandhiji, Acharya Kripalani. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan
and Nehruji.

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES

TABLE OF SEATS

PROVINCES	General Seats		Seats for backward areas and tribes	Sikh Seats	Mohammadan seats	Anglo-Indian Seats	European Seats	Indian Christian Seats	Seats for Commerce, Industry, mining & planting	Land-holders Seats	University Seats	Seats for Labour	Seats for Women				
	Total	General seats reserved for Scheduled Castes											General	Sikh	Mohammadan	Anglo-Indian	Indian Christian
Madras	215	146	30	1	—	28	2	3	6	6	1	6	6	—	1	—	1
Bombay	175	114	15	1	—	29	2	3	7	2	1	7	5	—	1	—	—
Bengal	250	78	30	—	—	117	3	1	19	5	2	8	2	—	2	1	—
United Provinces	228	140	20	—	—	64	1	2	3	6	1	3	4	—	2	—	—
Punjab	175	42	8	—	—	84	1	1	1	5	1	3	1	1	1	—	—
Bihar	152	86	15	7	—	39	1	2	1	4	1	3	3	—	1	—	—
Central Provinces and Berar	112	84	20	1	—	14	1	1	2	3	1	2	3	—	—	—	—
Assam	108	47	7	9	—	34	—	1	11	—	—	4	1	—	—	—	—
N. W. F. P.	50	9	—	—	—	36	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Orissa	60	44	6	5	—	4	—	1	1	2	—	1	2	—	—	—	—
Sind	60	18	—	—	—	33	—	2	2	2	—	1	1	—	1	—	—

In Bombay seven of the General seats shall be reserved for Marathas.

In the Punjab one of the Landholders' seats shall be a seat to be filled by a Tumandar.

In Assam and Orissa the seats reserved for women shall be non-communal seats.

CONTENTS

Hopes & Fears	....	....	a-f
Day By Day	...	...	I-LV
Snippets	...	...	LV-LVI
Pethick-Lawrence's announcement in Lords (Feb. 19)	....	...	1
Attlee's statement in Commons (March 15)			2
Delegation's Proposals (May 16)			8
Pethick-Lawrence broadcasts Proposals (May 16)			24
Cripps explains proposals at a Press conference (May 16)	...	...	28
Churchill Pampers minorities (May 16)			31
Viceroy's broadcast (May 17)			38
C-in-C addresses Armed Forces (May 17)			42
Simla Conference correspondence (April 27-May 12)	...	...	43
Delegation's memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy (May 22)	....		71
Jinnah's reaction to Proposals (May 22)			74
Congress Working Committee raises objections (May 24)	....	...	79
Delegation answer Congress and League objections (May 25)	....	....	83
Muslim League accepts Proposals (June 6)			86
Sikhs condemn Proposals (June 10)			88
Princes welcome Proposals (June 10)			90
States people demand representation on Negotia- ting Committee (June 11)	...		92
Looking Back	...	...	96

(Total No. of Pages 175)

tion of eight out of eleven Provinces on its own strength and of the ninth in coalition with another party, and enjoys the confidence of more than three-fourth of the entire population, showed exemplary selflessness in agreeing to its representation equal to six members on a Council of 14.

But the Muslim League was playing a different game. Mr. Jinnah, perhaps, was not sincere about joining hands with the Congress in the administration of the country. His chief concern was to obtain recognition of the Muslim League as the sole representative of the entire body of Muslims of India. It was a pointer to a dangerous plot against the Nationalist Muslims, whose cause the Congress espouses. The plot was of political extermination of the Ahrars, the Momins, the Majlis members, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Baluchistan Muslims and the Frontier Pathans who have repeatedly expressed their want of confidence in the Muslim League and its leadership. These men were insulted and many beaten and their property looted for their opposition of the League candidates at the last general election, but they patiently bore the ignominy for a higher cause. The Congress was now asked to give up the cause of these same brave men. The Congress, besides betraying the cause which is so dear to its heart, would have committed suicide if it had agreed to be representative of Hindus only. The Congress leaders rejected the suggestion with the contempt it deserved and, though the negotiations fell through, it has added several inches to its stature.

The Congress resolution dated June 26, rejecting the plan for the interim period, is as follows :—

"On May 24 the Working Committee passed a resolution on the statement dated May 16 issued by the British Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy. In this resolution they pointed out some defects in the statement and gave their own interpretation of certain parts of it. Since then the Committee have been continuously engaged in giving earnest consideration to the proposals made on behalf of the British Government

in the statements of May 16 and June 16 and have considered the correspondence in regard to them between the Congress President and the members of the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy.

"The Committee have examined both these sets of proposals from the point of view of the Congress objective of immediate independence and the opening out of the avenues leading to the rapid advance of the masses, economically and socially, so that their material standards may be raised and poverty, malnutrition, famine and the lack of the necessities of life may be ended, and all the people of the country may have the freedom and opportunity to grow and develop according to their genius. These proposals fall short of these objectives. Yet the Committee considered them earnestly in all their aspects because of their desire to find some way for the peaceful settlement of India's problem and the ending of the conflict between India and England.

"The kind of Independence Congress has aimed at is the establishment of a united, democratic Indian Federation, with a Central authority, which would command respect from the nations of the world, maximum provincial autonomy, and equal right for all men and women in the country. The limitation of the Central authority as contained in the proposals, as well as the system of grouping of provinces, weakened the whole structure and was unfair to some provinces such as the NWF Province and Assam, and to some of the minorities, notably the Sikhs. The Committee disapproved of this. They felt, however, that, taking the proposals as a whole, there was sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening the Central authority and for fully ensuring the right of a province to act according to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage. Certain other objections were also raised on their behalf, notably the possibility of non-nationals taking any part in the constitution-making. It is clear that it would be a breach of both the letter and spirit of the statement of May 16 if any non-Indian participated in voting or standing for election to the Constituent Assembly.

"In the proposals for an Interim Government contained in the Statement of June 16, the defects related to matters of vital concern to the Congress. Some of these have been pointed out in the letter dated June 25 of the Congress President to the Viceroy. The Provisional Government must have power and authority and responsibility and should function in fact, if not in law, as a de facto independent Government leading to the full independence to come. The members of such a Government can only hold themselves responsible to the people and not to any external authority. In the formation of a Provisional or other Government Congressmen can never give up the national character of the Congress, or accept an artificial and unjust parity, or agree to the veto of the communal group. The Committee are unable to accept the proposals for the formation of an Interim Government as contained in the statement of June 16.

"The Committee have, however, decided that the Congress should join the proposed Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India. While the Committee have agreed to Congress participation in the Constituent Assembly, it is in their opinion essential that a representative and responsible Provisional National Government be formed at the earliest possible date. A continuation of authoritarian and unrepresentative Government

can only add to the suffering of famishing masses and increase discontent. It will also put in jeopardy the work of the Constituent Assembly, which can only function in a free environment.

"The Working Committee recommend accordingly to the All-India Congress Committee and for the purpose of considering and ratifying this recommendation they convene an emergent meeting of the A-ICC in Bombay on July 6 and 7, 1946."

The Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, in a letter to the Viceroy a day earlier (June 25) explained the circumstances which prevented the Congress from agreeing to the proposed list of members of the Executive Council during the interim period. He wrote "One outstanding feature of this list was the non-inclusion of any Nationalist Muslim. We felt that this was a grave omission. We wanted to suggest the name of a Muslim to take the place of one of the Congress names on the list. We felt that no one could possibly object to our changing the name of one of our own men. Indeed when I had drawn your attention to the fact that among the Muslim League nominees was included the name of a person who had actually lost in the recent elections in the Frontier Province and whose name we felt had been placed there for political reasons, you wrote to me as follows :

'I am afraid that I cannot accept the right of the Congress to object to names put forward by the Muslim League, any more than I would accept similar objections from the other side. The test must be that of ability.'

"But before we could make our suggestion I received your letter of June 22 which surprised us greatly. You had written this letter on the basis of some Press reports. You told us that the Cabinet Mission and you were not prepared to accept a request for the inclusion of a Muslim chosen by the Congress among the representatives of the Congress in the Interim Government. This seemed to us an extraordi-

nary decision. It was in direct opposition to your own statement quoted above. It meant that the Congress could not freely choose even its own nominees. The fact that this was not to be taken as a precedent made hardly any difference. Even a temporary departure from such a vital principle could not be accepted by us at any time or place and in any circumstances."

The Muslim League feels greatly chagrined on being told that its cooperation in forming the interim Government is not desired. And this at a time when its President had extended his hand of cooperation to the Government and speculations of the League alone forming the interim Government were rife in the country. Mr. Jinnah, perhaps, will never forgive the Viceroy for this rebuff.

Meanwhile, a political truce has been declared. Neither the Congress nor the League nor any other non-official is to form the interim Government. It will be wholly a bureaucratic show. The statement of the Delegation and the Viceroy of June 26 on the subject is as follows :—

The Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy are glad that constitution-making can now proceed with the consent of the two major parties and of the States. They welcome the statements made to them by the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League that it is their intention to try and work in the Constituent Assembly so as to make it a speedy and effective means of devising the new constitutional arrangements under which India can achieve her independence. They are sure that the members of the Constituent Assembly who are about to be elected will work in this spirit.

The Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy regret that it has not so far proved possible to form an interim coalition Government, but they are determined that the effort should be renewed in accordance with the terms of paragraph 8 of their Statement of June 16. Owing, however, to the very heavy burden which has been cast upon the Viceroy and representatives of the parties during the last three months, it is proposed that the further negotiations should be adjourned for a short interval during the time while the elections for the Constituent Assembly will be taking place. It is hoped that when the discussions are resumed, the leaders of the two major parties, who have all expressed their agreement with the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission on the need for the speedy formation of a representative interim Government, will

do their best to arrive at an accommodation upon the composition of that Government.

As the Government of India must be carried on until a new interim Government can be formed, it is the intention of the Viceroy to set up a temporary caretaker Government of officials.

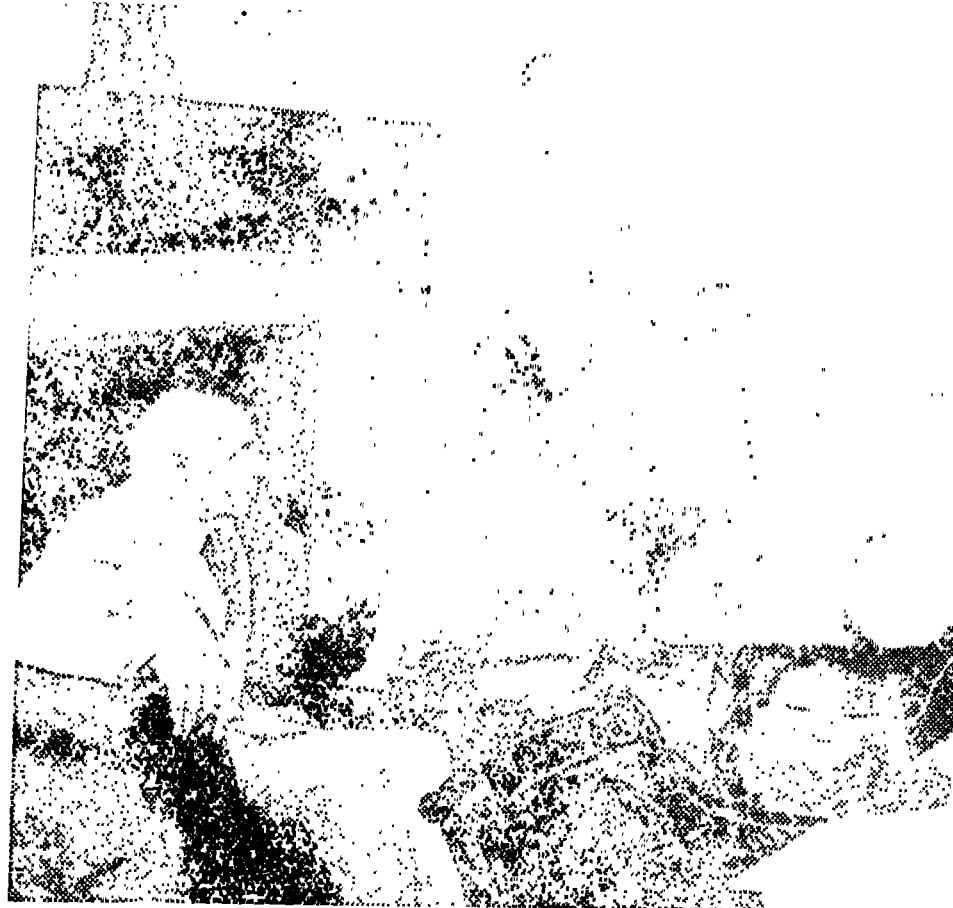
It is not possible for the Cabinet Mission to remain longer in India as they must return to report to the British Cabinet and Parliament and also to resume their work from which they have been absent for over three months. They therefore propose to leave India on Saturday June 29. In leaving India the members of the Cabinet Mission express their cordial thanks for all the courtesy and consideration which they have received as guests in the country and they most sincerely trust that the steps which have been initiated will lead to a speedy realization of the hopes and wishes of the Indian people.

In the next one month or so the parties will prepare for the resumption of the negotiations in early August, when the elections to the Constituent Assembly will be over. The All-India Congress Committee is meeting on July 6 to take stock of the situation and endorse the stand taken by the Working Committee. - The Akali Panthic Board, which has rejected both the long-term and interim plans, is meeting early next month to decide its future course of action in the light of the Congress approval of the long-term plan. The Muslim League will take a little too long to forget the tremors of the recent shock.

And now back again. The following pages of this diary, which opens on February 20, reveal the most absorbing drama ever played on the Indian political stage.



Cabinet Delegation at Work



February 20

Yesterday the 76-year-old Lord Pethick-Lawrence (once a prisoner of His Majesty's Government and now their trusted Secretary of State for India) announced in the House of Lords the Government's decision to send out to India a delegation of three Cabinet Ministers (Lord Pethick-Lawrence himself, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A.V. Alexander) to discuss with Indian party leaders on the spot the question of solving the political deadlock in the country (For full text see elsewhere below).

The announcement, which has come eight months after the Simla Conference broke up in the summer of 1945, is due to reasons more political than charitable. Since the conferees at Simla had parted after receiving Lord Wavell's historic advice of 'forget and forgive,' the common man had been feeling very much embittered. He neither forgot nor forgave.

The political temperature of the country during these eight months showed a dangerous tendency to rise. A burst-up became inevitable which occurred this month.

Naval ratings and the Royal Indian Air Force men raised the banner of revolt in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. The flabbergasted Englishman saw the Union Jack, which rules the seven seas and many countries, pulled down and the Tricolour flown in its place by the same men whom he regarded as the mainstays of his Imperial structure in India.

The rebellious thoughts had long before found sanctum in the ranks of the Army which became manifest only after the heroic exploits of the Indian National Army in south-east Asia, under the leadership of

Subhas Chandra Bose. No more the Army could be doped with directives, conciliatory or minatory. It showed a desire to be a real people's army.

Food scarcity was another sphinx riddle of the powers-that-be. Either they fed the people or they would have to beat a retreat before the magnitude of the problem. Britain can no longer rule India in the way she has done so far. Besides, the much-boosted "Big Three" unity had of late shown a tendency for disruption. India's goodwill and active support were needed in the event of an explosion.

Fortunately, meanwhile, the British electorate replaced the Tory horses by those belonging to the Labour to run the administration of their country.

The Socialists soon after coming into power sent out a delegation of ten members of Parliament to establish contacts with Indian party leaders and to report to the Government on the ways and means to placate Indian nationalism. The ten rovers arrived in India on January 5. They travelled far and wide, met many people of all political hues, ranging from ocean blue to dark red. They stayed in the Taj, and went to the villages; they attended cocktail parties in Delhi and joined a funeral procession in Madras. Becoming wiser after a four-week crowded itinerary, they began to speak to the Government harshly and unequivocally.

Mr. Reginald Sorensen, a Labour M.P., in an interview in Calcutta said: "There are very vital energies coursing through the Indian body politic and certainly the possibility of strong emotional eruption. The character of this varies from place to place. But no one can ignore the tremendous urge, demand and expectancy of India regarding her future. Unless they find satisfactory expression, undoubtedly, there is danger of considerable tension and conflict. I can only trust that positive constructive goodwill will be translated

by all parties into wise and vigorous actions at an early date”.

The M. P. Delegation returned on February 10 and the announcement of a three-member Cabinet delegation quoted above was made on February 19.

February 23

The announcement has not evoked much enthusiasm in India. The Congress attitude is of “wait and see”. Many promises were made in the past and broken. Maulana Azad, the Congress President, has counselled patience. He says: “If the British Government fails to honour in letter and spirit their declaration of September 1945 (reference to Lord Wavell’s statement after the failure of last Simla negotiations), the Congress will consider the necessary steps for a final and decisive struggle. Let not the Congress decision to wait and watch be construed as unwillingness to fight.”

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, makes the prospects of a settlement not a whit brighter. He says: “I have already made it clear repeatedly that we are definitely opposed to the setting up of a single constitution-making body and also to the formation of what is now described as a representative political executive of the Governor-General as an interim arrangement. There is no need or any justification for the contemplated Executive Council. The major issue must be decided first and the demand of Muslim India for Pakistan must be accepted. After the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan we can proceed to settle details.... Any departure from this position must lead to disaster and we shall be compelled to resist any such move in every way we can.”

I wonder if a settlement is at all possible in these circumstances. Below are given a few representative

opinions expressed by party leaders and in the Press this week.

Mr Sarat Chandra Bose, Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly : The decision is certainly wise from Great Britain's point of view. Whether it will prove wise from India's point of view remains to be seen. India has not had in the past very happy experiences of commissions and missions.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: Lord Pethick-Lawrence and his colleagues must go straight to the main issue before them as to how best they can set up a new Central Government for the interim period which would really be a 'Caretaker Government' and then to establish a constitution-making body.

'The National Herald', Lucknow: Though there is little to praise and much to condemn in the British Government's latest approach to the Indian question, we would refrain from the adverse comment the approach deserves.

'The Tribune', Lahore: If the almost historic announcement that three Cabinet Ministers are coming to this country fails to arouse enthusiasm amongst the people that will be largely because similar missions in the past have not proved fruitful and because the leaders of Britain have given no indication of their desire to liquidate the Empire.....If the object of the new Mission, however, is to draw up plans for transferring power to the people it is most welcome and can claim the fullest possible cooperation from them.

'The Hindustan Standard', Calcutta: As a statement of policy, however, the present announcement is wholly disappointing. It breaks no new grounds and it marks no new departure from the stand taken in the Viceregal Declaration of September 1945.

'The Leader', Allahabad: Past experience makes for caution.....If the deadlock created by

League intransigence persists, are His Majesty's Government prepared to forge ahead on the basis of a just procedure or will they again allow Mr. Jinnah to veto the advance of Hindus and Muslims alike ?

'*The New Times*,' Moscow : Badly camouflaged appeals for preservation of English domination in India show that the Indian people have grounds for not trusting such declarations. In England they have been speaking about goodwill for a long time already, but India, as formerly, bears the crushing yoke of a colonial regime which deprives 400,000,000 people of elementary human rights.

March 3

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a mammoth gathering of expectant people at Jhansi, and told them that if the British Cabinet Delegation failed again to solve the pressing and urgent problems which clamoured for solution, a political earthquake of devastating intensity would sweep the entire country. Public mind has been so aptly spoken.

We wait for the Cabinet Delegation's arrival when Lord Pethick-Lawrence and his colleagues would bend their energies to "reconcile the irreconcilable and solve the insoluble."

March 11

The Congress Working Committee will meet tomorrow in Bombay. Will it again show the same ugly haste as it did last September to step into the British parlour ? Let us pray our leaders are more restrained this time.

Mahatma Gandhi today gave an inkling of his mind to the people gathered at Rungta House to attend his prayer meeting. He said suspecting the British 'bona fides' in advance was a variety of weakness. "If a debtor came to your house in contrition to repay his debt,

would it not be your duty to welcome him?" If the British Government fail to do their duty he promised to guide the people himself on the future course of action.

March 14

The Congress Working Committee has met during the last three days and discussed broadly the announcement made by Lord Pethick-Lawrence on February 19. But no resolution has been adopted which more than anything else indicates that the Committee is not very much enthusiastic about the announcement.

March 15

The British Prime Minister is kept informed of public reactions in India and by now he is well aware that the Delegation when they go out to India will not receive a warm welcome. To allay Nationalists' fears, therefore, the Prime Minister today made an important announcement in the House of Commons (for full text see elsewhere below).

He said the Government's objective is help India to attain full independence, even though it may mean secession from the British Commonwealth. He also dropped a bomb-shell on communalists by declaring that their game of obstruction is up. "We cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of a majority" he said. Mr. Attlee, also, by implication, lashed out at Pakistanists. To him the problem in India for solution is of "bringing together in one great polity the various constituent parts".

March 16

The Nationalists feel reassured. Pandit Nehru at a Press conference in Delhi has welcomed the "pleasant change in tone and approach in Mr. Attlee's speech.

But Mr. Jinnah is out of sorts. He who, along

with his doubtful following of 100 million Muslims, was boosted up as an 'important element' in the country through the merciful efforts of Amerys and Linlithgows, realized for once that his game of bluff would not after all be worth playing any more. He violently attacked Gandhiji and accused him of spoiling the atmosphere for negotiations with the Cabinet Delegation. The League Fuehrer said: "Mr. Gandhi only puts the gloss of non-violence knowing full well that nobody believes in it nor for the matter of that does he himself mean non-violence. It is only a shelter for him and a pose that as an apostle of peaceful methods he may be able to continue to practise hypocrisy, fraud and bamboozle the world, especially foreign countries." A brilliant example of decency outraged.

Mr. M. N. Roy (pray, don't refer to 13,000 episode) tunes up with Mr. Jinnah. He says the British Labour Government has decided to help the establishment of a totalitarian regime in India. "What right have they to pave India's way to Hell with their constitutional criticism and stupid conventionalism."

March 19

The Delegation have left Britain for India today by air. Asked at the airport by a correspondent how long the Delegation Members will stay in India, Mr. Alexander's cryptic reply was: "It may be weeks or it may be months".

March 23

The Delegation arrive at Karachi. Officials and a large number of Press correspondents met them at the Mauripur Airport. The Secretary of State, acknowledging the greetings, said: "As my colleagues and I set foot on the soil of India, we bring to the people of this country on behalf of the British Government and of the British people a message of cordial friendship

and goodwill. We have come to settle with India and not to adjudicate on the rival claims of different political parties and settle disputes among them.....We can assure you that in our negotiations we shall not seek to provide for anything that is incompatible in any way to the sovereign dignity of India."

Cripps promised to the Press correspondents that he and his colleagues would return only when their work was over.

Nationalist circles are quite hopeful.

Arrangements for the Delegation members' stay have been made in the south-east wing of the Viceroy's House. We—a pack of over 200 news-hounds—will not be permitted to go anywhere near it and restrictions will be rigorously enforced. But I am not down cast like the other chaps. I have a friend among the secretariat staff of the Delegation, and I will not let my Editor down. Telephone booths have been installed for local, trunk and overseas calls. "Flash messages" can be sent from the Press Camp itself at the Viceroy's House. Longer despatches may be sent from special telegraph offices attached to the Press Information Bureau.

March 24

The Delegation arrived in Delhi at 12-30 p.m. at Palam Aerodrome. I have just returned from there. Old contacts were renewed and fresh made. Once we almost behaved like school children. We were asked to keep out of the landing ground. But when we saw three 'white' correspondents going along with the Viceroy's party to meet the Delegation, we became restive and broke the cordon. Cripps was jocular as usual. Somebody asked him why he was looking so fit. Pat came the reply that he ate too many carrots and tomatoes. (for other snippets see elsewhere).

The staff of the Delegation includes :

Sir William Croft, Deputy Under-Secretary of State ; Mr. F. F. Turnbull, Private Secretary ; Mr. A. H. Joyce, Publicity Adviser ; Col. Fraser, Political aid-de-camp ; and Mr. E.W.R. Lumby—with Lord Pethick-Lawrence.

Major Woodrow Wyatt, M.P., Major Short and Mr. B.G. Blaker, Private Secretary—with Sir Stafford Cripps.

Mr. F.W. Mottershead, Private Secretary ; Sir Lawrence Mason, Personal Assistant ; and Miss Booker—with Mr. A. V. Alexandar.

March 25

The Delegation held a Press conference in the afternoon.

Star reporters have been flown to India by many foreign papers to 'cover' the Delegation.

There are about 40 of them representing foreign papers and news agencies. They are Fraser Wighton (*Reuters*), D. Edwards (*B.B.C.*), G.N. Harding (*Exchange Telegraph*, London), Preston Grover (*A.P. of America*), Mrs. E. Marcuse (*Agence France Presse*), Paul Feng (*Central News of China*), Petr Gladyshev and Oleg Orestov (*Tass*, Moscow), J. Holburn (*The Times*, London), Peter Stursburg (*Daily Herald*, London), Mrs. Ela Reid (*Capetown Natal Daily News*), Ralph Izzard (*Daily Mail*), D.V. Tahmankar (*Reynolds News*, London), Henry Keys (*Daily Express*), Colin Reid (*Daily Telegraph*, London), Miss C.K. Kuming (*Christian Science Monitor*, Boston and London), Robbert Sherrod (*Time and Life*), George E. Jones (*New York Times*), B. Shiva Rao (*Manchester Guardian*), Norman Cliffe (*News Chronicle*, London), Palme Dutt (*Daily Worker*), Andrew A. Freeman (*New York Post*), A.T. Steele (*New York Herald*), Miss Betty Graham (*Colliers*), Phillips Talbot (*Chicago Daily News*), Alfred Wagg (*Chicago Tribune*) and L. G. Wigmore (*Australia*).

Among the Indian correspondents charged with covering the negotiations are Durga Das (*The Hindustan Times*), Joachim Alva (*Forum*), P. D. Sharma (*National Herald*) Sri Krishna (*Bombay Chronicle*). Chaman Lal (*The Tej*) S. A. Sabawala (*Free Press Journal*) and a host of others.

Before the Conference began all lights in the conference room were switched on, and the three Cabinet Ministers sat in silence for several minutes as movie and still cameramen photographed them.

The Conference was more a battle-ground of rival political thoughts. The protagonists of Pakistan or division of India, cannonaded the Delegation members with questions demanding elucidation of that part of Mr. Attlee's statement in which he declared that the minority would not be allowed to place their veto on the advance of the majority. Lord Pethick-Lawrence admitted that the Muslim League is not merely a minority political party but is in fact a majority representative of the great Muslim community.

Q. Do the Labour Government regard Muslims as a nation or a minority ?

A. We regard them as one of the great communities in India.

Q. When Mr. Attlee referred to minorities did he include in that term Muslims or not ?

A. The Muslims are a minority in the whole of India. In some sense they can be said to be a minority. They are a great deal more than a minority. The Muslim League is the majority representative of the Muslim community.

I feel amused at the unique interpretation. But does it mean putting into cold storage Mr. Attlee's bold declaration of March 15 ?

Another question : Do the Government stand by the pledge given by Lord Linlithgow in 1940 that no

important element in India's national life would be coerced into accepting a Government not acceptable to it.

A. As years go by the situation changes. You have to adapt the promise to the existing situation. The promise stands in spirit of course.

This time it is the correspondents holding different opinion look worried.

I have sent out my 'copy'. I ponder. Shall we continue to look to Englishmen? How long we have to suffer their quibbling on a matter which is of vital importance to us—our freedom?

March 26

The Press conference of yesterday has a mixed reception in the Press. *The Hindustan Times* (owned by Birla Brothers) has featured the story on the front page under the banner headline: "Full independent status for India." The banner in the Free Press Journal of Bombay is "A joke, a hoax and a fraud".

The Delhi correspondent of the latter paper writes: "Unashamed, unrepentent, brazen-faced, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India and Leader of the Cabinet Delegation, once again for the umpteenth time repeated the much-exploded myths of British trusteeship of India, the need for an agreed solution among the Congress, as representative of larger numbers; the Muslim League, majority representative of the great Muslim community; and the Princes.

"The Delegation have come to India not to transfer power, but to set up a constitution-making body and to set up a more representative Executive Council during the transition period—that is to replace the quislings of today by the quislings of tomorrow".

The Delegation members set to work today. They held discussions with members of the Viceroy's

Executive Council for two hours. The subjects discussed were India's constitutional future and the setting up of a new interim Government at the Centre.

Over 50 leaders have been invited by the Viceroy to meet the Delegation. Dr. Ambedkar, though his party was routed at the elections, is also among the invitees. A member of the Congress High Command complains : "Why the dickens were any elections held if so many non-descripts had to be interviewed?"

March 27

Mr. Joyce, Publicity Adviser of the Delegation, held a Press conference, but he made the situation worse. In reply to a question, he said : "The possibility of securing an interim Government having the support of the main parties before an agreement is reached on the broad basis of the future constitution remains to be elucidated in the light of the forthcoming discussions with Indian leaders and representatives." It means in effect the resurrection of the minority's veto.

Mr. Attlee had suggested an interim Government commanding the "greatest possible support" in India. Lord Pethick-Lawrence at the Press conference of two days ago had said that the interim Government should have "full popular support". But the plain meaning of Joyce's statement is that the interim Government should have the support of the "main parties".

In an editorial under the Caption "Sir Oracle," the *Hindu* of Madras has advised the Delegation to address the Press or the public directly on matters of policy. "If the Mission has given Mr. Joyce a general power of attorney to this effect, the sooner it is revoked the better."

Maulana Azad at a Press conference in Lucknow today has stated that the Congress would never agree to the setting up of two Constituent Assemblies. This

has the effect of killing baseless rumours that the Congress might be persuaded to agree to a separate Constituent Assembly for Muslims.

March 29

The Delegation send an urgent call to Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad. Letters from Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps are flown to Gandhiji through Mr. Sudhir Ghosh to Uruli near Poona where he was then staying. According to the original programme, Gandhiji was to meet the Delegation in the first week of April, but the Cabinet Ministers find it too hard to make any beginning, in view of the irreconcilable attitudes taken up by the Congress and the League on the question of setting up of one or more than one Constituent Assembly. The Delegation, therefore, think that Gandhiji's advice is necessary before the League and the Congress Presidents are officially contacted.

The Cabinet Ministers held discussions with Provincial Governors yesterday and today.

March 30

Sir Stafford called at Mr. Jinnah's Delhi residence in the morning and had an informal talk with him for an hour.

The Leaguers have openly begun to talk of civil war if their demand for Pakistan is not conceded. Two days ago the Commander-in-Chief broadcast a message to the Army officers in which he warned them not to connive at actions which might impair the discipline, efficiency and loyalty of the Army to the Government of the day. He has also promised full military help if the police are unable to cope with the situation.

April 1

Today I was crushed with work, work, work. There

were too many events to be covered,

Gandhiji arrived in Delhi and drove to Bhangi Colony where arrangements for his stay are made. His house is a cream-coloured one-storey room, 30 feet long and 15 feet wide, with six windows. It is at a stone's throw from the enclosure in which about 800 municipal sweepers and their family members live—in squalor and filth. I have visited the room, thanks to a responsible person there. The floor is covered with a grey carpet bordered with pink. A comfortable seat covered with spotless khadi will serve as Gandhiji's study. There are separate tents for visitors and Press correspondents. Also, there are two tele- phones at the camp.

In the evening Sir Stafford Cripps and Major Wyatt went to meet Gandhiji at the Bhangi Colony. Sir Stafford talked to the Mahatma for half an hour behind closed doors. Gandhiji afterwards went to the Viceroy's House and talked to Lord Pethick-Lawrence for about 75 minutes.

The Cabinet Delegation have begun their series of negotiations with Indian party leaders. The first to be interviewed today were Dr. Khan Sahib, the Frontier Premier, and Mr. Gopi Nath Bardoloi, the Assam Premier. Both these Provinces are claimed by Mr. Jinnah for inclusion in the Pakistan of his dreams. But both the Premiers strongly opposed Mr. Jinnah's claim at their meeting with the Cabinet Ministers.

Since Joyce's Press conference grave doubts had been expressed in the Nationalist Press about the Delegation's sincerity of purpose. The mischief must be undone if the Delegation want to succeed. Sir Stafford, therefore, held a Press conference in the afternoon and gave very assuring replies.

One of us asked if the pledge given to the minorities in 1940 stood. Sir Stafford's answer was:

"We want to start on a fresh basis; we cannot go back to Queen Victoria's Proclamation and the succeeding statements. If we do that we may get into an awful muddle,"

The League camp also hummed with activity. The Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, met Mr. Jinnah. The League Working Committee also met to discuss the resolution to be moved at the League Legislators' Convention this week-end.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has arrived in Delhi.

April 2

Today the Delegation met the League leaders from the Frontier, Assam, Punjab and Sind. The Cabinet Ministers' object in so inviting them seems to be to know the viewpoints of Leaguers other than Mr. Jinnah. Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, the erstwhile Congressman from the Frontier, was twitted by Sir Stafford, who reminded the League leader of his severe criticism of the Pakistan idea in his book *Gold and Guns on the Pathan Frontier*, published not long ago. Nawab of Mamdot was dismissed in 20 minutes which confirmed his reputation of being a 'dumb wrestler' (to quote the Punjab Premier),

After lunch the Delegation members met the ailing Sir Tej at the latter's residence and discussed with him several implications of the Sapru Conciliation Committee's findings. In the afternoon five highlights of Princely India—the Rulers of Bhopal, Bikaner, Patiala, Gwalior and Navanagar, were trooped in to the Viceroy's House.

The *Times of India* today has featured an interview given by Mr. Jinnah to Norman Cliffe, Foreign Editor of the *News Chronicle* in Delhi, in which the League Fuehrer confessed that he did not consider himself to be an Indian. What nonsense. Why not then quit India? India is for Indians only.

Norman Cliffe's despatch to his paper also contained the following sentences which were omitted by the *Times of India*!—"A gaunt and rigid obstacle standing athwart the path of the British Ministers who have hopes of restoring freedom to a united India. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, aged 70, who assumes the title of Qaid-e-Azam or great leader of the Muslim League. Sitting in his study beside a great bowl of full blown roses he revealed to me the stubborn rock the Cabinet trio have either to overcome or bypass".

April 3

The Delegation met the Congress President today. The time allotted for the interview was three hours, but the meeting lasted only one and three-quarters of an hour. Speculations begin. Did the talks end abruptly?

We clustered round Maulana Azad as he emerged from the Viceroy's House and pestered him with questions. But he dismissed us saying: "I am fully satisfied with the progress made and the spirit and atmosphere in which the talks are proceeding."

Gandhiji's visit to the Viceroy's House today was a great event. The smartly dressed orderlies of the august House, the sepoys in uniform and police sergeants joined the crowd which followed the distinguished visitor. The British staff of the Delegation stopped work and occupied vantage positions at windows and in verandahs to watch Gandhiji arrive and depart.

Gandhiji makes an attempt to arrest the downward tendency of public enthusiasm over the Cabinet Mission's work in India. He spoke at the evening prayer that it is "unmainly to disbelieve the Cabinet Mission. The Mission will not betray us."

Mr. Jinnah's opposition to the setting up of one Constituent Assembly remains unchanged and his threat of civil war hangs fire.

April 4

The Delegation meet Mr. Jinnah today. The interview lasted full three hours allotted for the meeting.

The day's surprise was Jinnah-Tara Singh interview at the house of Sir Teja Singh Malik, the Prime Minister of Patiala. For once Mr. Jinnah had to go out of his house to meet an Indian party leader. Last month also when the League Fuehrer went to Lahore with the object of breaking up the Unionist-Congress-Akali Coalition Ministry in the Punjab, Master Tara Singh had rebuffed Jinnah by telling him: "Why not come to my house if you want to meet me."

But April 1946 is not March 1946. Mr. Jinnah is panicky today. It is his last opportunity to see the object of his dreams in flesh and blood and he is prepared to surrender any thing—the prestige included—to make this possible. What a change (say fall, if you please) in a man who is dreaded by his followers and partymen, and who has always denied bare courtesies to his opponents, however big.

Mr. Jinnah stayed at Sir Teja Singh's house for one and a half hours and is reported to have told the Ruler of Patiala who was also present at the meeting : "I am ready to see you as many times as you want me."

April 5

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement today at a Press conference at the Hotel Imperial has gladdened all Nationalists. He has struck the last nail on the Pakistan coffin.

Nehru said : "The Congress is not going to agree to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan under any circumstances whatever, even if the British Government agrees to it. Nothing on earth that I can see, including the U.N.O., is going to bring about the Pakistan which Mr. Jinnah claims. It is not a question of the Congress agreeing or not. Even if the Congress agrees,

it is not going to come off because the people concerned will not have it."

The Delegation have met the Sikh representatives, Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Mr. Harnam Singh. Other visitors at the Viceroy's House today were Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Malik Khizr Hyat Khan, and Sardar Baldev Singh.

The people grow more restive. They ask that the Delegation have by now met all those who count in the country. They have met the Congress representatives, formally and informally, the League representatives, the Princes and the delegates of other minorities. How long will the Delegation take to announce their decision?

The initiative evidently is in the Delegation's hands. The reason is there is no point of agreement between the two major political parties. The Congress demands one Constituent Assembly, the League opposes it. The League demands Pakistan or division of India, and the Congress refuses even to look at it. The Congress wants the immediate setting up of an interim Government at the Centre, but the League President is of the opinion that no useful purpose will be served if the principle of Pakistan is not conceded in advance.

Sir Stafford keeps up his informal discussions with party leaders. At lunch he met Sardar Patel and in the evening Pandit Nehru.

News-hounds are busy too. In 12 days since the Delegation arrived in India, 691,658 words have been wired out, according to a news agency report. Of this total, 120,058 words were sent by cable overseas.

April 6

Public uneasiness about the outcome of the talks increases. A question is persistently asked. Will the Cabinet Delegation bypass the League if it refuses to hear the voice of reason?

A cynic has asked me what exactly are the Muslims' fears. Who is going to devour them? Three men count at the moment in India and all of them are Muslims. Maulana Azad represents the Congress, Mr. Jinnah the League and the Nawab of Bhopal the Princely India.

The Delegation meet the Congress Premiers of the U.P., the C.P., Bombay, Bihar and Orissa. The Premiers emphasized before the Delegation the urgent need of setting up a National Government at the Centre.

The *Daily Herald*, official organ of the British Labour Party, carries today on its leader page short profiles of Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Mr. Jinnah under the caption: "Four wise men of India," from its New Delhi correspondent. About Maulana Azad the correspondent writes:

"I always think of him as one of the wise men of the East. With his beard and sharp brown eyes Azad looks as learned as his title 'Maulana' suggests. He is one of the world's greatest scholars in Urdu, Arabic and Persian. He has translated the *Qoran* into Urdu. Azad has a much better claim to be the spiritual leader of the Indian Muslims than Mr. Jinnah, yet he is the President of the Congress. That is because Maulana Azad believes in India's unity and thinks that Islam's strength is far greater than any political arrangement. He is a shrewd political man and I am told Lord Wavell is more impressed by Maulana Azad than by any other political figure."

The correspondent dismisses Mr. Jinnah with the remark that "although he is the President of the Muslim League and claims to be supreme commander of all Indian Muslims he is not a typical Muslim."

April 7

The biggest event of the day was the first session of the Muslim League Legislators' Convention which opened in the premises of the Anglo-Arabic College

About 450 members came post-haste from far and near at their Fuehrer's bidding.

Mr. Jinnah dressed in a Punjabi *salwar* and *achkan* arrived at the meeting-place about half an hour late, perhaps according to plan. He occupied a chair too large for him on the floodlighted stage. The only other seat allowed on the platform was a small chair for the Secretary, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, who sat uncomfortably in it. It was a stupid replica of the former Nazi Party rallies at Nuremberg.

Mr. Jinnah repeated for the umpteenth time that the acceptance of the principle of Pakistan was *sine qua non* of consideration by the League of any proposal to join an interim Government. He also threw out a veiled threat that if the Delegation bypassed the League claim a civil war would result in India.

The Convention is an ingenious propaganda stunt. Whoever fathered the idea must be immediately made Deputy Quaid-e-Azam, provided the Q.A. agrees to share the Muslim Nation's burden with someone else.

April 8

The Tory Press in Britain gets ready to receive the news of the breakdown of political talks in India and prepares to absolve Britain of responsibility in the event of failure. The *Daily Telegraph* writes : "It is the hopelessly divided, fanatically ignorant and shamelessly unpatriotic Indians who are to blame and Indians cannot even accept independence offered on a silver platter."

The *Daily Mail* did a greater mischief. It published an utterly baseless story from its Delhi correspondent which stated : "A close associate of Mr. Jinnah has told me that there is likely to be a treaty between Britain and India lasting for 15 or 20 years and granting Pakistan for this interim period. A part of the

Punjab, however, would not be included in the Pakistan area, but it would go to Hindustan.

"Mr. Jinnah as head of the Muslim State would keep close liaison with the Hindustan Central Government in New Delhi, though he would demand a free hand in his own territory. The treaty would also provide for Britain to maintain non-aggression forces on the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan. The plan was said to have been put by the British delegates to Mr. Jinnah and he had agreed to it."

Nationalist circles are fully disgusted with such canards and with the Cabinet Delegation's reticence in killing such stories.

April 9

Mr. Jinnah's camp-followers have out-Fuehrered their Fuehrer in Congress-baiting. Vilest abuses were heaped on the Congress and open incitement to violence to exterminate the Hindus was made at the third-day session of the League Convention.

Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier, began very much like the late (?) Hitler. He said Pakistan is Muslims' latest but not the last demand. He warned Britons not to entrust the destinies of India to the 'Congress junta', this 'murderous band.' If they did, the Muslim League will not allow the Central Government to function even for a day.

Ch. Khaliquzzaman, League leader from the U.P. : "Muslims have been called *goondas* and Hindus cowards. Well, in a state of anarchy it is the *goonda* who has the upper hand. The Congress demand for interim National Government is just a political fraud."

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, the Frontier renegade from the Congress: "A Congress Government at the Centre will not be able to function for one day. Ten crores of Muslims would be rebels and determined to over-

throw it at the first opportunity, I hope that the Muslim Nation will strike swiftly before such a Government can be set up in this country."

The knight errant from the Punjab, Sir Firoz Khan Noon : "We shall show these blood-sucking *Martians* that we can raise the standard of living in Pakistan higher than in any country in the East. If Great Britain puts us under *Hindu raj*, let us tell her that destruction and havoc that the Muslims will do in this country will put into the shade what Chengez Khan did."

These "disgracefully incendiary" speeches have made Hindus very angry.

The Convention has formulated the latest League demands which are an advance on the Pakistan Resolution of Lahore. The resolution passed at the Convention says:

1. That the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the north-east and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan in the north-west of India, namely, Pakistan zones, where the Muslims are in a dominant majority, be constituted into a sovereign independent State and that an unequivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay.

2. That two separate constitution-making bodies be set up for the people of Pakistan and Hindustan for the purpose of framing their respective constitutions.

3. That the minorities in Pakistan and Hindustan be provided with safeguards on the lines of the All-India Muslim League resolution passed on March 23, 1940, at Lahore.

4. That the acceptance of the Muslim League demand of Pakistan and its implementation without delay are the *sine qua non* of Muslim League co-operation and participation in the formation of an interim Government at the Centre.

The *Western Mail*, a leading Welsh national daily, today features an interview given to its special correspondent in Delhi by Mr. Jinnah. The correspondent writes : 'I asked Mr. Jinnah how it was possible to get over the difficulty of a Hindu bloc created by the United Provinces and Nepal interrupting communications between Muslim blocs on the north-east and north-west. Mr. Jinnah answered that it would be essential to have a corridor of sufficient width to be protected on the principle of the Suez Canal. Pakistan should have a port for each Muslim bloc, presumably Calcutta and Karachi.'

This explains Suhrawardy's laconic statement that Pakistan is the latest and not the last demand of the Muslim League.

Gandhiji has met the Viceroy and the C.-in-C. today and has asked him to declare general amnesty without exception to all political prisoners. He has specifically requested for the release of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

April 10

The Christian leaders, Sir Maharaj Singh, Mr. Ratnaswami and Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, have submitted a memorandum to the Delegation in which they agree to accept joint electorates in the Legislatures and local bodies with or without reservation of seats for the Christian community.

April 11

The Delegation have issued a statement today. It says: "The Cabinet Mission came out with the view that a speedy settlement of the outstanding questions was essential. They have since their arrival heard the opinions of the most important political elements in India. Accordingly, they are now proposing to enter on the next and most important phase of the negotiations. It

is a phase which calls on the utmost efforts from the leading statesmen of India, and from the Cabinet Mission, to arrive at a solution acceptable to all sides.

"The Mission are confident that at this great moment in the history of India it will be possible with mutual goodwill to reach that decision which the people of India so anxiously await and which will be welcomed throughout the world. The Mission hope that much progress towards this will be made before they leave for their short recess (in Kashmir) at the end of the next week. During the absence of the Delegation there will be an opportunity for decisive consultation between the Indian parties. When the Mission return they hope to find sufficient elements of agreement on which a settlement will be based."

The statement just expresses a pious hope and nothing more. There appears to be no possibility of any such joint consultations between the Congress and the League leaders. Many attempts were made in the past, one even as late as September 1944, when Gandhiji paid 19 visits to Jinnah's house without receiving a single return, but nothing resulted from those attempts at settlement.

Just now it is reported from Agra that Messrs J. P. Narain and Lohia have been released. I am happy and feel that Socialist leaders, through their affinity with the younger generation, will strengthen the wavering hands of our leaders.

April 12

The Congress Working Committee held two sessions and took stock of the political situation.

Sardar Sant singh, a Sikh leader, speaking in London has paid back Mr. Suhrawardy's threat of a civil war. The Sardar said : "If Pakistan is conceded by the British my community will not accept Muslim

rule in the Punjab and will never accept it. A civil war in India will begin on the day that the British conceded Pakistan and will last until the day Pakistan areas have been reconquered and reunited with India."

The Delegation meet a few more leaders today. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose is one of them.

April 13

Pandit Jawaharlal, who is also the President of the All-India States People's Conference, has at a Press conference demanded that the representatives of the States people should also be invited by the Delegation. No settlement regarding the States' future will be just without consulting the 93 million people who live in the States.

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain, who rushed to Delhi after his release yesterday calls on Gandhiji and Nehru. Jai Prakash has very much changed since the August revolution. He worked underground long enough to know the urges and the changed temper of the people. This advantage was denied to our leaders in the Working Committee who were suddenly arrested before the revolution started. I learn J. P. told the leaders that they should not compromise with the British or the League at any cost. Any compromise which was derogatory to the status of India as a free united nation will not be acceptable to the people,

The communal seeds sown by Messrs Suhrawardy and Co. at the League Legislators' Convention begin to bear fruits. Reports of communal clashes and dacoities in the houses of Jamiat-ut-Ulema (a body of Nationalist Muslims) workers are received from Hissar, Bhopal, Patna, Monghyr and Muzzaffarnagar (U. P.). In Bhopal bands of fanatic Muslims shouting anti-Hindu slogans, swooped on Hindu temples and resident houses.

April 14

A memorandum is submitted today to the Delegation by a few leading Punjabis in which they make the startling revelation that the Punjab is not a Muslim-majority Province, but the census figures in 1921 and 1931 were inflated through bogus entries. Mr. Ahmad Hassan Khan, who conducted the census operations in 1941, is quoted to have admitted in his report that "attempts were made in some places by enumerators to swell the figures of their communities by means of bogus entries or to curtail the strength of rival communities by scoring out persons who were actually present on the final census night." Besides, the memorandum reveals, members of the Scheduled Classes, like *churas* and *sansis*, in Muslim villages were registered as Muslims.

April 15

The Congress Working Committee has concluded its session.

Maulana Azad on behalf of the Congress makes a new offer to the Muslim League which contains four things, first complete independence; second, united India; third, one Federation composed of fully autonomous units which will have residuary powers in their hands and, fourth, two lists of Central subjects, one compulsory and the other optional.

The formula has the merit of removing the reasonable fears of the Muslims. It gives them complete autonomy to determine their administration in the Province in which they are in majority. But the Muslim-majority Provinces will have to remain in one Union. This has drawn an interesting comment from a humorist in the *Indian Express* of Madras. It is in verse form and is captioned: "The Judgement of Azad"—

Once in Venice Shylock stood
 On the bond Antonio signed.
 Qaid-e-Azam, avaricious.
 His own wishes, fond, pernicious.
 Tried to force on Infant Ind.
 Dr. 'C.R.'—clever as ever—
 Showed by a formula tidy, neat
 How to cut a pound of meat
 And not let out a drop of blood.
 "Fie—joh—fum!" cried Qaid-e-Azam.
 "Flesh I want and I want blood."
 Solomon Azad saw and smiled
 And gave judgement, meek and mild :
 "Do not feel, O angry brother,
 The agony of a childless mother
 Take the living, healthy child.
 Take its flesh and take its blood,
 Take its body, and take its soul ;
 Only, only, take it whole !"

The Nationalist Muslims are not afraid of League threats. Dr. Khan Sahib, the Frontier Premier, addressing a large public meeting at Peshawar tells the people : "The lovers of Pakistan have always shirked direct action and will again run into their holes at the time of the next struggle leaving poor and ignorant masses in the lurch. I would welcome a revolution in India just to prove who are men of action and who are not."

Many meetings of Nationalist Muslims have been held in Delhi during the past few days. Vast crowds gathered at these meetings, which started late in the evening and continued till the early hours of next morning. Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari, an Ahrar leader, addressed a meeting at Juma Masjid for six hours. He began at midnight and finished at six in the morning.

Not one person moved from his seat. Pandit Nehru also attended one of these meetings.

Interesting news from London. Mr. Fenner Brockway, Political Secretary of the Independent Labour Party, told a public meeting that instructions have been sent to Cabinet Ministers in India that they must not return until they have reached an agreement with the Indian party leaders.

A few more princes and landowners are received by the Delegation. In the forenoon, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, and Mr. L. B. Bhopatkar met the Cabinet Ministers and submitted a memorandum containing the Mahasabha's viewpoint. Territorial self-determination was strongly opposed. As regards the interim Government they suggested that it should be composed of 11 representatives elected by the eleven Provincial Assemblies which should coopt four more members representative of such minorities as are not represented on it.

April 16

The Delegation want the Congress and League leaders to hold joint discussions during the absence of the Delegation members in Kashmir so that when they return after their Easter recess they may have a joint statement containing their demands. Mr. Jinnah was called to the Viceroy's House where he had two hours' discussion with the Cabinet Ministers. The Delegation will meet Maulana Azad tomorrow.

A deputation of Nationalist Muslims has met the Delegation. It included Mr. Hosseinbhoj Laljee, President of the All-Parties Shia Conference; Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madni, President of the Nationalist Muslims Parliamentary Board; Mr. Abdul Majid Khwaja, President of the All-India Muslim Majlis; Sheikh Hisamuddin, President of the All-India Ahrars; Sheikh

S.Z. Zahiruddin, President of the All-India Momin Conference. Mr. Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim, the U.P. Communications Minister, acted as interpreter.

Maulana Azad's offer of yesterday has been rejected by the League. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, general secretary of the League, has issued a statement in which he says: "There is nothing new in the reasons and arguments advanced by the Congress President. All these and many more were trotted out by opponents of the Muslim League in the last general elections and after examining the whole question carefully the Muslim nation has given its verdict in favour of Pakistan. The demand for Pakistan today is not based on fear of the Hindu majority at the Centre, but it is the urge of a nation to mould its national life in accordance with its own ideals and culture and cannot be satisfied without having full sovereignty which necessarily implies full control over all Departments, without exception."

April 17

Efforts continued the whole day for bringing the Congress and the League at one conference table for joint discussion. The Delegation had a two-hour meeting with Maulana Azad in the day, and after dinner Cripps went to Jinnah's house and was with him till about midnight. Cripps will meet Gandhiji tomorrow morning.

Mr. P.C. Joshi, general secretary of the Communist Party of India, had a 35-minute interview with the Cabinet Ministers.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has arrived in Delhi.

April 18

Sir Stafford went to the Bhangi Colony at 6-30 a. m. and talked to Gandhiji for over an hour. In the afternoon Gandhiji met Lord Pethick-Lawrence at

the Viceroy's House. Efforts for arranging Congress-League talks have met with no success. The reasons are two-fold. First, there is no common point of agreement between the Congress and the League; they differ on fundamentals; second, Mr. Jinnah has declined to meet Maulana Azad as the representative of the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah has sent away the members of his Working Committee. The Congress President has left for Mussoorie and Nehru will leave for Lucknow today.

April 19

The Delegation have left for Kashmir.

A sense of frustration seizes the people. And from frustration result anger and frayed tempers. Communal tension grows. A minor incident occurred today in Delhi. The Deputy Commissioner has issued an order under Section 144, Cr. P. C., banning the carrying of firearms, *lathis* or other weapons, or keeping and collecting bricks or any other missiles in any building. The rates of premia for insurance against civil commotion and riots in certain localities of Bombay and Karachi have been increased twenty-four times of the rates prevailing before February 22.

The American magazine *Time* publishes a pen-picture of Mr. Jinnah today. It says; "Today Mr. Jinnah revels in his one man show. Nobody in all his Muslim League can be called the No. 2 man or even No. 8. He delights in the princely processions staged by his followers when he tours the Muslim cities of Northern India. His buglers herald his arrival at railway stations. Bands play 'God save the King', because that is the only tune they know. Today Mr. Jinnah not Mr. Gandhi is the *prima donna* on India's stage."

April 21

While the Cabinet Ministers spend their day in

fishing, sight-seeing and big game shooting in Srinagar (Kashmir) and the leaders patiently wait till the Delegation's return for the resumption of negotiations, a bomb-shell is thrown in the midst of Nationalist circles by Mr. Fenner Brockway, who a few days ago told a London gathering that the Delegation had been instructed not to return from India until they had reached some agreement with the Indian party leaders. Mr. Brockway, while addressing the annual conference of the Independent Labour Party at Southport, said that he had in his possession information received from a 'reliable source' in Bombay that the British authorities in India are gearing up their administrative machinery to suppress any nationalist movement that may, through conscious efforts or otherwise, start in the event of a break-down of the negotiations.

April 22

The Delegation will return to Delhi day after tomorrow.

Sardar Patel in a statement today suggests the immediate handing over of power by Britain either to the elected representatives of the Congress or of the League. He also suggests that the interim Government must be immediately formed without even consulting the League and the Congress. Let each of the eleven Provinces send one representative and about four or five may be taken from among the minorities. The suggestion is similar to that made by the Hindu Mahasabha President in his memorandum to the Cabinet Delegation.

The India Office has refused to confirm or deny Brockway's statement of yesterday. Whatever be the truth in the statement, people are genuinely suspicious of the Government's intentions. A Lucknow report says that personal letters of the Congress Ministers in

the U. P. are being censored by a special branch of the C. I. D.

April 23

Ex-President Hoover of America, now Chairman of the U.S. Famine Inquiry Commission, arrives in Delhi.

India faces starvation. The Government of India have appealed to the U.S. for help. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar recently led a food delegation there and requested the Combined Food Board (Britain, America and Australia) to meet India's four million tons shortage of food this year. On his return from America, Sir Ramaswami triumphantly announced that 1,400,000 tons of wheat and 145,000 tons of rice had been granted by the Board for the period ending June 30. But soon afterwards the American authorities explained that no final allocations had been made so far. Will Hoover do anything for us?

Hoover visited Gandhiji soon after his arrival in Delhi. Jinnah declined to meet him. The League President wanted to meet Hoover at his own residence, but this was not possible for the time at Mr. Hoover's disposal was too short. Jinnah refused to go to the Viceroy's House to meet the U.S. ex-President. Prestige is to be cared for more than people's lives. This consideration decided Mr. Jinnah's action.

Pandit Nehru also met Mr. Hoover and suggested to him the possibility of rice imports from Java.

April 24

We expected hopeful results from Hoover's visit. But prior to his leaving for Bombay he has denied there are famine conditions in India. By the term 'famine' he and his countrymen mean actual deaths from starvation. So till that happens, perhaps, nothing can be done.

The *Daily Express* of London publishes a story from its correspondent in India on the famine conditions

in Madras. The story is captioned: "I have seen people who are going to die." The correspondent predicts the famine of 1946 to be worse than that of 1943 in Bengal.

The Delegation have returned to Delhi.

A 14-year-old Hindu boy is stabbed in the Lodi Road Colony (Government Servants' quarters). The incident appears to be well timed with the Delegation's return. Police patrol the city.

April 25

No proposals yet by the Cabinet Ministers. Has the salubrious climate of Kashmir done no good to them? Cripps dines with Jinnah tonight.

Maulana Azad makes an important statement today. He says: "A stage has been reached in the present negotiations in which we should be prepared to face both ways. While the Congress Party is hoping that the British Ministers' work will result in a settlement of the Indian problem, we are not overlooking the other side."

The Delegation are openly accused in the Press of playing a dual game in the course of the negotiations. Shankar, the *Hindustan Times* cartoonist, in a drawing captioned: "Between you and me", shows Cripps, attired in a *sherwani* and a Turkish cap, sitting near Jinnah in a melancholy mood, and Jinnah proudly smoking a pipe. In another picture Cripps is shown dressed in a Gandhi cap and *dhoti* and sitting cross-legged on the floor before Gandhiji, who is perhaps cracking a joke with him.

April 26

Cripps meets Maulana Azad at noon, Gandhiji at 7.30 p.m. and Mr. Jinnah at 10 p.m. But no results. Nothing short of recognition of a sovereign State comprising of the six Provinces claimed by him will satisfy Mr. Jinnah.

Maulana Azad exercises his Presidential right and recommends to the Congress delegates the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for election to the presidentship of the Indian National Congress for the next session. It was thought that Nehru would take over on May 1, the last date for filing nomination papers, if no other nomination were filed. But a mischievous, though misguided, suggestion has been made by a few foreign correspondents here that this is to satisfy Jinnah who has refused to meet Maulana Azad as the Congress representative. The suggestion was scotched as soon as it was put out and it is now decided that the Maulana will continue in office until November when the next plenary session of the Congress will meet.

Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari has challenged Mr. Jinnah to address along with him a meeting of Muslims on Pakistan and abide by the verdict of the meeting.

April 27

Hot news today. At 4 p.m. the Delegation issued the following statement:

"On their return from Kashmir the Cabinet Delegation decided to initiate by informal contacts a further attempt to find a basis for a settlement by agreement between the two main parties. As a result the Delegation have today invited the Presidents of the Congress and the Muslim League to nominate representatives of the Working Committees of the Congress and the Muslim League to meet together with the Delegation to continue the negotiations."

The statement breaks new ground and the condition of "nothing doing" ends.

Letters have been despatched to Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah from the Delegation's office asking them to nominate four representatives each to meet the Delegation members and the Viceroy at one table.

Simla is suggested as the probable venue of the Conference (for full text of the letter see p. 43).

The Cabinet Delegation in the letters referred to above also set out their tentative formula for devising a new constitution for India which may be acceptable to both Congress and League.

The formula contains three clauses :

1. A Union Government dealing with foreign affairs, defence and communications.

2. Two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Muslim Provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the Provinces in the respective Groups desire to be dealt with in common. The Provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights.

3. It is contemplated that the Indian States will take their appropriate place in this structure on terms to be negotiated with them.

Both the Congress and the League viewpoints are sought to be partially met.

April 28

Maulana Azad accepts the invitation and nominates himself, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to meet the League representatives and the Delegation members at a joint conference.

The Congress President, however, emphasized that the proposed Federal Union must have both an executive and legislative machinery as well as the finance relating to these subjects, and the power to raise revenues for these purposes in its own right. Currency, customs and tariffs are also asked to be included among the common subjects (for full text see p.45).

The League President has also accepted the Delegation's invitation, but has drawn their attention to

the League demands embodied in the Lahore resolution of 1940 and the resolution passed at the League Legislators' Convention of April 7. He also makes it clear that by accepting the invitation to the Tripartite Conference the League will not be committed to the tentative formula of the Delegation (for text see p.47).

The League team for the Conference consists of Mr. Jinnah, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar.

April 29

Lord Pethick-Lawrence writes to the Congress and League Presidents assuring them that the points raised by them in their letters of yesterday can be discussed at the Conference itself and that the acceptance of the invitation for the joint conference does not imply full approval by them of the tentative formula set out by the Delegation (for full text see p. 47 and 48).

The League and Congress representatives are asked to be present in Simla on the morning of May 2 on which the Tripartite Conference is proposed to be held.

While negotiations for the transfer of power from British to Indian hands continue in Delhi, the successor of Sir Maurice Hallett in the U. P., threatens to exercise the Governor's veto on the Congress Ministry's decision to release a few long-term political prisoners. If the veto is exercised the Ministry will have no alternative but to resign. What then? Will the Congress Ministries in other Provinces do the same? Will the forthcoming Simla negotiations not come off? Such questions are freely discussed.

April 30

The political storm in the U. P. passes off. Wags say that the Viceroy pulled up the Governor and warned him not to precipitate the matters.

The date of the Tripartite Conference at Simla has been changed to suit the convenience of Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues. A bad omen. Dilatoriness at the outset.

The Conference will now be held on May 5.

The States people too become active. The sub-committee of the All-India States People's Conference demands representation for the States people at all conferences which may be called upon to determine the future of the Indian states.

May 1

Arrangements for the leaders' stay in Simla are now complete. Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru will stay in 'Retreat', which was last the official residence of the Government of India's Information Member. Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan will live in 'Chadwick', which was formerly occupied by the Governor of Burma. 'Yarrows', a typical English country house, will accommodate Mr. Jinnah.

I have received a telegram from my Editor to move up. And tonight I go to those inviting cool heights.

May 1 (midnight).

I am moving up and with me a thousand others, some leaders and many followers. Huge crowds gather at every railway station, and raise slogans of 'Gandhiji ki Jai,' 'Pakistan Zindabad', 'Hamara Nara Jai Hind'. A pensive thought seizes me. What if the negotiations fail? But immediately I brush aside the idea. No, they must not fail. On one occasion I happened to catch the eye of one of the Congress representatives to the Conference. A question. But the answer is smiles.

May 2

The Congress team along with Gandhiji, who has been requested by the Delegation to be available in

Simla for advice during the negotiation period, have arrived in Simla.

Pandit Nehru has a 75-minute interview with the Viceroy today.

I am billeted at the Cecil, an ideal hub for political gossip. You can talk scandals also if you like.

May 4

League representatives to the Conference arrive.

An unusual thing happens. Gandhiji has asked his private secretary, Mr. Pyarey Lal, and other members of his staff who are always with him wherever he is, to move down. This reminds me of Gandhiji's hurrying away from Delhi during the 1942 negotiations on the basis of Cripps' Proposals.

Is the sending away of his staff to Delhi a precursor of Gandhiji also moving down? Does it mean that the negotiations are bound to fail?

But Gandhiji assures that this decision of his means nothing of that kind. He wants a little escape from his close associates and to put himself unreservedly in the hands of God.

May 5

The Tripartite Conference opens today. The whole of Simla is agog from early morning.

The unsophisticated hillmen occupy vantage positions on the route leading to Viceregal Lodge to have a glimpse of their leaders.

Ten A. M. The Conference is in session. The conference room has a large portrait of the late Duchess of Dufferin and also a portrait of Field-Marshal Sir Philip Chetwood, a former Commander-in-Chief. On one side of the oval table sits Lord Pethick-Lawrence. Sir Stafford sits on his right and Lord Wavell and Mr. Alexander on his left. The League delegates sit to the right and the Congress to the left. From left to right

are Patel, Azad, Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Nawabzada, Jinnah, Nishtar and Nawab Ismail. Mr. Turnbull, Secretary to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, sits a yard away.

Lord Pethick-Lawrence stands up and welcomes both the Congress and League delegates to the Conference. He reads to them the letters received by him from Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah in reply to his letter of invitation dated April 27.

Maulana Azad replies to the welcome speech and the conferees immediately come to deal with brass tacks.

A cryptic *communiqué* was issued at the end of the Conference which stated:

"The Conference after preliminary statements by the parties discussed the arrangement for their sittings and then proceeded to deal with the agenda. The first item discussed was the question of a Union centre for all India.

"It was agreed by the Conference that no statements will be made to the Press by any member, but that an official statement will be issued each evening.

"The Conference appointed a committee, consisting of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and Sir Stafford Cripps, to settle the terms of the Press *communiqué*. The Conference decided that it would meet twice every day at 11-30 a. m. and 4 p. m.



May 6

Before the Conference meets today, Maulana Azad has sent a letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence in which he expresses his dissatisfaction with the 'Vagueness' of talks yesterday at the Conference (for full text see p. 49).

The Congress President objects that the discussions deviated far from the basic question which is the immediate granting of Indian independence, followed by the withdrawal of British troops from India.

Other matters are subsidiary and could be discussed by the Constituent Assembly at the proper time. Azad also expressed his opposition against the talks proceeding on the assumption that a group of Provinces under the Union will have a right to have a common executive or legislative machinery. That would result in creating three layers of executive and legislative bodies, an arrangement which will be cumbrous. Another objection to the subjects under discussion at the Conference was to the proposal for parity as between groups in regard to the executive or legislature.

The Conference met at 11-30 a.m. and adjourned at 1-30 p.m. It met again from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Today's *communiqué* issued from the Conference office is:

"The Conference met today from 11-30 to 1-30 and again from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. They decided to adjourn until Wednesday (May 8) 3 p.m. in order to give the parties an opportunity to think over and discuss points that had been raised. The Conference considered the questions of Provincial powers, of the grouping of Provinces, and of the constitution-making machinery."

Gandhiji is invited to meet the Viceroy at 7-30 p.m. The meeting lasts one and a half hours. Sir Stafford was also present at the meeting.

Bhulabhai Desai's death is announced today. He was the moving spirit of the last Simla Conference.

May 7

Hurried confabulations are held among the Conference members. The C-in-C meets Lord Wavell. Later he visits Nehru. The Viceroy interviews Jinnah. And Cripps talks to Gandhiji.

Gandhiji announces at the evening prayer meeting that even if the Conference is not able to help reach a settlement, the Delegation will not go back without

implementing Mr. Attlee's promise of granting independence to India.

The *Daily Express* of London publishes a story from its correspondent in Simla in which a *pucca* sahib of the variety of Kipling is reported to have told the correspondent : "I would like to have my men shoot that fellow Cripps " Perhaps because Cripps knows that the days of British rule in India are numbered and this spiritual son of Kipling does not know, nor cares to know.

The correspondent writes: "They (meaning sahibs and memsahibs) move palely loitering in strange new atmosphere impregnated with politics among Congress Chiefs looking like Roman Senators in sweeping togas of homespun, among strident processions of Congress volunteers. And all the time amidst and through this shifting scene move silent, ragged, shaven-skulled transport coolies roped to impossible burdens labouring without complaint or hope."

May, 8

Lord Pethick-Lawrence sends a document, captioned "Suggested points for agreement between the representatives of Congress and the Muslim League" to both Maulana Azad and Mr. Jinnah for their consideration (full text on p.52).

In order to give sufficient time to the leaders to carefully consider the document, the Conference which was to meet today at 3 p.m. has been adjourned until the same hour tomorrow.

The document contains nine clauses dealing with the probable points of agreement between the League and the Congress. Under Clause I have been listed subjects to be dealt with by the all-India Union Government. These are foreign affairs, defence, communications and fundamental rights and powers to obtain for

itself the finances required for these subjects. Clauses 3 & 4 refer to the formation of groups of Provinces and the setting up by them of their own executives and legislatures. Clauses 5 & 6 grant parity of representation to the Hindu and Muslim majority Provinces in the Union Legislature and the Executive. Clauses 7 & 8 deal with the composition of one Constituent Assembly and its working.

Jinnah sends a reply (see full text on p. 54) to Lord Pethick-Lawrence's letter forwarding the document. In that letter Mr. Jinnah objects to the "fundamental departure from the official formula embodied in your (Lord Pethick-Lawrence's) letter of April 27." He objects to the inclusion of "fundamental rights" among the subjects to be dealt with by the Union Central Government. He has also opposed the setting up of only one Constituent Assembly.

Azad, Nehru and Patel meet the Viceroy and hold discussion with him.

May 9

Lord Pethick-Lawrence sends a reply to Mr. Jinnah's letter of yesterday and tries to explain to Mr. Jinnah the inaccuracies in his letter (see p. 57). The Secretary of State adheres to his decision of including "fundamental rights" among the Central subjects. At more than one place Mr. Jinnah is politely snubbed for attempting to confuse the matters.

The Conference faces the gloomy prospect of a breakdown. Jinnah in his letter of yesterday had said that no useful purpose would be served by the League delegates attending the Conference in those circumstances.

Leaders are busy from early morning. Azad-Cripps, Nehru-Cripps, Cripps-Azad and Nehru, Jinnah-Wavell and Gandhi-Cripps meetings take place.

The Congress President also replies today to the document received from Lord Pethick-Lawrence containing the suggested points of Congress-League agreement (see p, 59). He reiterates the objections previously raised by him.

The Conference met at 3 p.m. and soon afterwards a deadlock was reached. Each party was unwilling to concede the other's point of view. In these circumstances, Pandit Nehru suggested the only alternative possible. The suggestion of referring the dispute to an umpire. The proposal at once had the approval of the Conference, which was adjourned for 45 minutes to enable Nehru and Jinnah alone to talk it over between themselves. After 45 minutes the Conference reassembled and after hearing both the leaders on the possibility of both parties agreeing to refer the dispute to an umpire adjourned until day after tomorrow to give sufficient time to the parties concerned to reach an agreement on the subject.

An important announcement is made in today's *communiqué* issued from the Conference office. It states: "The members of the Executive Council, including his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, have placed their respective portfolios at the disposal of His Majesty the King and of his Excellency the Viceroy, in order to facilitate the arrangements which the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy are seeking to make." This has the effect of acquainting the leaders with the Delegation's earnest desire to set up a new interim Government as early as possible.

Nehru has been declared elected unopposed the next President of the Indian National Congress.

May 10

Pandit Nehru this morning wrote to Mr. Jinnah asking him to get ready with his list of possible umpires so

that at their next meeting they might agree on any one name. To this letter Mr. Jinnah replied saying that the suggestion to fix on an umpire needed to be further discussed by them before he could be asked to prepare a list of possible umpires and for this he suggested that Pandit Nehru met Mr. Jinnah at the latter's residence (see texts of letters on p.64).

Again a delicate situation—will the President-elect of the Congress go to Mr. Jinnah's house? Why can't Jinnah come to meet Pandit Nehru? General opinion in the Congress Working Committee is not in favour of Nehru going to Jinnah's house. Nehru himself does not approve of the suggestion, according to my informant. But Gandhiji, who is as keen as ever about a genuine understanding between Hindus and Muslims, is reported to be favouring the suggestion.

May 11

Pandit Nehru has written to Mr. Jinnah that he will meet the League leader at the latter's residence at 10-30 this morning. The Congress has never stood on prestige when questions of grave national consequence are at stake.

Five minutes before 10-30 Pandit Nehru reached Mr. Jinnah's house and talked to the occupant of the house for 75 minutes, but no compromise was reached. Jinnah showed unwillingness to refer the Congress-League dispute to arbitration, as he was well aware of what the award would be on such unreasonable demands as the League's were.

The Tripartite Conference which met at 3 p.m. has adjourned until tomorrow. A complete deadlock has been reached and the end is in sight.

Gandhiji meets the Viceroy after the conference is over.

Nehru has received over 200 letters and telegrams

protesting against his meeting Jinnah at the latter's house.

Jai Prakash Narain has sent out a call from Bombay to his country-men to get ready for the next final struggle to complete the August 1942 revolution. About a lakh people heard him at the Chowpatty and many times as large as that member read his speech in the newspapers. The political temperature of the country is fast rising. What if the failure of the Conference is announced tomorrow ?

May 12

The worst has happened. The negotiations have broken down. Two *communiqués* have been issued today, one announcing the breakdown and the other dealing with the next step to be taken—

"After considering the views put forward by the two parties, the Conference has come to the conclusion that no use would be served by further discussions and that, therefore, the Conference should be brought to a conclusion. The Cabinet Mission desire to emphasize the fact that no blame can be placed on either party for the breakdown of the Conference as both sides did their utmost to come to a settlement. It is proposed in the course of a few days to publish the correspondence that has passed between the parties during the Conference."

The other *communique* is : "The British Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy, while greatly regretting that the discussions in Simla have not led to any agreed plan between the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League for proceeding with the working out of a new Indian constitution, wish to make it clear that this does not in any way bring to an end the mission with which they were charged by H.M.G. and the British people. The Cabinet Delegation and the

Viceroy will be proceeding to Delhi on Tuesday (day after tomorrow) and it is their intention to issue a statement in the course of a few days expressing their views as to the next steps to be taken."

Besides the correspondence which passed among the party leaders and the Delegation members, referred to above, three documents dated May 12 embodying the League demands and the basis for agreement suggested by the Congress form part of the correspondence connected with the Conference—see p. 66).

May 13

The general feeling is that it is all for the good the farce has ended and that it is certainly no use working on a post-mortem examination of the Conference. But many are genuinely sorry. Millions who do not understand politics and have no voice in it either and whose daily concern is to eke out a living wage had at the beginning of the Conference a vague idea—very vague—that the Conference would produce a Government which would be sixteen annas (colloq.) theirs of dark-skinned men like themselves and of those whom they could easily approach. These politically-dumb millions are sorely disappointed.

May 14

The Delegation are back in Delhi and I too and all the Jacks and Jills who went up a week ago. One solitary Press correspondent met the Delegation at the aerodrome this evening. Perhaps the Press more than any one else offers encomium to a person according to the value of the work he does. No good work, no reception.

May 16

A 5,000-word statement embodying the Delegation

tion's views on the future constitutional set-up of India is announced on the radio by Lord Pethick-Lawrence in a slow but emphatic voice (for full text see p 8.) The document though couched in a recommendatory language is in effect the British Government's award on the subject it deals with.

May 17

The Delegation's statement published yesterday has a varied reception. That part of it which rejects the idea of a separate independent sovereign State for Muslim Provinces as demanded by the League has satisfied all Nationalists, but certain other features like compulsory grouping of Assam with Bengal; and N. W. F. P. with Punjab and Sind, for the purpose of devising the future constitution, and the shutting out of the States people's voice in the future constitution-making are viewed with suspicion.

Reception in the Congress and the Nationalist Press is at any rate good.

Gandhiji at the evening prayer meeting annouced that the Delegation's Proposals contain the seed to convert 'this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering.' He asked the people to make a careful study of the document before arriving at a conclusion regarding its merits.

The Delhi organ of the Muslim League and League leadess are reticent and wait for the reactions of their leader who is still at Simla. But they admit that the proposals cannot just be rejected out of hand.

The worst reception is from the Sikhs. The Akali leader, Master Tara Singh, says he is stunned and does not know what to do. He bitterly complains that the interests of the Sikhs have been completely sacrificed, inasmuch as in the constitution-making body that may be set up under the Proposals, the Sikh represen-

tation in a House of about 400 will be of four only. The Sikh leader threatens direct action against the Government and those of the Indian parties who might work out the scheme.

A Press conference was held in the morning at which Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps replied to questions put to them. Two points were made clear at the conference: first, the Government do not at the moment contemplate secession from the Indian Union of any Province or group of Provinces; second, compulsory grouping of Provinces at the initial stage is an important feature of the proposals which cannot be given up. The Secretary of State also made clear that the question whether the Union would have the power to impose customs duty and income-tax and levy other taxes has not been ruled out, but that it would be open to the Constituent Assembly to take any decision on it.

Reports of discussion of Proposals in the House of Commons are received. Mr. Churchill, whose Government was largely responsible for most of the League intransigence, plays again his game of pandering to the Indian minorities (see page 31). He complains that the interests of the minorities—the 100 million Muslims and six million Scheduled Classes—have been ignored, though he conveniently forgets the 100 million States people, and that he as the Leader of the Opposition will reserve his right as to the further action to be taken.

The reply given by Lord Addison, Dominions Secretary, in the House of Lords to Viscount Simon that the setting up of the interim Government would not mean any thing more than a change of personnel and that the "power and the duties of the Viceroy will remain as before" has not met public approval.

The Viceroy and the Commander-in Chief broadcast messages to the Indian people and the Armed Forces respectively. The Service personnel is asked to be loyal to the Government of the day and the C.-in-C. promises to work just as well under the new Indian War Member as the Commanders in Britain serve under Civilian Ministers (for text of the speeches see p. 38 and 42).

May 18

All correspondence that passed among the party leaders and the Delegation members until the breakdown of the Simla Conference on May 12 is published today.

May 19

Three days have passed since the Delegation's Proposals were made known. Since then much has happened.

The leaders and the public have reconsidered the Proposals and found in them many features which prejudice the growth of a healthy national life. The Press has also become critical. Much public enthusiasm which was spontaneous two days ago has died down.

Gandhiji has during these days met the Viceroy and the Delegation several times and asked for elucidation on certain points on behalf of the Congress. The Working Committee of the Congress too is considering the Proposals, but is not in a mood to finalize its conclusions.

Mr. Jinnah is mum still. It is a strange atmosphere.

Many snags may be pointed out in the Proposals.

1. Compulsory grouping of Provinces, whereunder the free voice of the Frontier and Assam to decide for a constitution for themselves will be stifled. The representation of these Provinces in their respective Sec-

tional constituent-making bodies will be too small to have any weight in the process of constitution-making.

2. European members of Bengal and Assam Assemblies will be able to send about six representatives to the Constituent Assembly, though their total number in these two Provinces is approximately 10,000. The principle of giving representation on the basis of one seat to every one million people has been rejected in the case of Europeans (the European Legislators of Bengal have lately decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly election).

3. States people have been given no representation on the Negotiating Committee which will be set up to negotiate the States' future with the Union Government. It will wholly be a princes' show. Paramountcy after leaving British hands will vest in the Rulers and not in the people.

4. No promise is given when the British troops will be withdrawn from India.

5. The interim Government will not be responsible to the Legislature.

6. The sovereign status of the Constituent Assembly is not recognized.

June 15

During the last almost one month many events have happened. The Congress Working Committee met on May 18 and continued its deliberations till May 24, when they passed a resolution pointing out several objectionable features in the Proposals (see p.79). The Delegation issued a statement on May 25 attempting to answer the Congress criticism (see p. 83), but it was wholly unsatisfactory. The Committee subsequently met on June 9 and discussed till June 14, when finally the Congress President informed the Delegation

and the Viceroy of the Congress decision to reject both the long-term and the interim plans devised by the Delegation.

During these four weeks, Gandhiji and other Congress leaders had many interviews with the Delegation and the Viceroy and sought clarification on controversial points, but no satisfactory reply was received by them.

The League Working Committee and the All-India Council met on June 3 and 5 respectively and after letting out some steam against the Government and the Congress agreed to work out the Proposals (for full text of the resolution see p. 86).

The Princes, whose status was defined by the Delegation in their statement (see p. 71) on May 22, met at Bombay and expressed their readiness to help in implementing the Proposals (see p. 90).

All representative bodies of Sikhs gathered at Amritsar on June 10 to forge a united front against the working out of the Proposals, which completely ignored their interests. Col. Niranjana Singh Gill of the I.N.A. was unanimously appointed dictator to man any movement which might be started (see p. 88).

The General Council of the All-India States People's Conference meeting in Delhi passed a resolution (see p. 92) on June 11 demanding representation for the States people on the Negotiating Committee.

The Hindu Mahasabha, the Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc have rejected the Proposals.

June 16

The Delegation and the Viceroy are determined to work out their plan for setting up an interim Government at the Centre. A statement issued by them on the subject today is given below.

1. His Excellency the Viceroy, in consultation with the members of the Cabinet Mission, has for some

time been exploring the possibilities of forming a coalition Government drawn from the two major parties and certain of the minorities. The discussions have revealed the difficulties which exist for the two major parties in arriving at any agreed basis for the formation of such a Government.

2. The Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission appreciate these difficulties and the efforts which the two parties have made to meet them. They consider however that no useful purpose can be served by further prolonging these discussions. It is indeed urgently necessary that a strong and representative Interim Government should be set up to conduct the very heavy and important business that has to be carried through.

3. The Viceroy is therefore issuing invitations to the following to serve as members of the Interim Government on the basis that the constitution-making will proceed in accordance with the Statement of May 16:—

Sardar Baldev Singh, Sir N. P. Engineer, Mr Jagjivan Ram, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr M. A. Jinnah, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr H. K. Mahtab, Dr John Matthai, Nawab Mohammed Ismail Khan, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

If any of those invited is unable for personal reasons to accept, the Viceroy will, after consultation, invite some other person in his place.

4. The Viceroy will arrange the distribution of portfolios in consultation with the heads of the two major parties.

5. The above composition of the Interim Government is in no way to be taken as a precedent for the solution of any other communal question. It is an

expedient put forward to solve the present difficulty only, and to obtain the best available coalition Government.

6. The Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission believe that Indians of all communities desire to arrive at a speedy settlement of this matter so that the process of constitution-making can go forward and that the Government of India may be carried on as efficiently as possible in the meantime.

7. They therefore hope that all parties especially the two major parties will accept this proposal so as to overcome the present obstacles, and will cooperate for the successful carrying on of the Interim Government. Should this proposal be accepted the Viceroy will aim at inaugurating the new Government about the 26th June.

8. In the event of the two major parties or either of them proving unwilling to join in the setting up of a coalition Government on the above lines, it is the intention of the Viceroy to proceed with the formation of an Interim Government which will be as representative as possible of those willing to accept the Statement of May 16th.

9. The Viceroy is also directing the Governors of the Provinces to summon the Provincial Legislative Assemblies forthwith to proceed with the elections necessary for the setting up of the constitution-making machinery as put forward in the Statement of May 16th.

The following letter was sent to the Presidents of the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League by the Viceroy today :—

“As the Statement shows, the Cabinet Ministers and I are fully aware of the difficulties that have prevented an agreement on the composition of the Interim

Government. We are unwilling to abandon our hope of a working partnership between the two major parties and representatives of the minorities. We have therefore done our best to arrive at a practicable arrangement taking into consideration the various conflicting claims, and the need for obtaining a Government of capable and representative administrators. We hope that the parties will now take share in the administration of the country on the basis set out in our new Statement. We are sure we can rely on your Working Committee to look to the wider issues and to the urgent needs of the country as a whole, and to consider this proposal in a spirit of accommodation."

June 20

The announcement, which came exactly one month after the Delegation's long-term plan for the constitutional set-up was made known, has left the Nationalists absolutely chill. The questions of parity and exclusion of a Nationalist Muslim from the popular Executive Council are unrepentently resurrected. Be it remembered that the last question caused the undoing of the 1945 Simla Conference. A question is asked were all these three months a criminal waste of national energy, if the Congress is now called upon to accept a position which, if accepted, would mean its death as a national organization, and which it boldly rejected a year ago.

The broad features of the interim Plan are—

(1) Caste Hindu-Muslim parity (instead of Congress-League); (2) Congress representation of five on a Council of 14 ; (3) Non-inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim ; (4) Exclusion of Mr Sarat Chandra Bose, whose name was suggested by the Congress President for inclusion (5) Inclusion of Sir N. P. Engineer, who is in the service of the Crown ; (6) No indication as to the allocation of portfolios.

Gandhiji is quick to realize the chagrin of the common man and the dangers arising out of this feeling. He, therefore, asked the people at his evening prayer meeting to discard the dark side of the picture as contained in the Plan and look to its bright side. But the people remain unconvinced.

SNIPPETS

March 24

The Cabinet Delegation arrived at the Delhi aerodrome. Sir Archibald Rawlands, the Finance Member, Government of India, introduced Shankar, the cartoonist of the *Hindustan Times*, to Mr. A V. Alexander, saying: "Look, here is the Low of India." Alexander cast an admiring glance at the cartoonist and said: "Don't forget to take note of the pimple on my nose." Shankar faithfully followed the advice in drawing his cartoons.

* * * *

Sir Stafford Cripps recognized a turbaned journalist (Mr. A.S. Iyenger), who pestered him with his volley of questions at Press conferences during the 1942 talks. But he was surprised when told that Mr. Iyenger is no more a newspaperman, but is the Government of India's trusted Principal Information Officer. Sir Stafford broke into a hearty laugh and said: "We in England talk of a poacher turning into a keeper."

* * *

March 31

Gandhiji journeyed from Bombay to Delhi to meet the Delegation. When his special train arrived near the Gangpur station (B.B. & C.I. Rly), a young Muslim cabinman on duty forgot to give the signal for the train to pass. The train stopped and the cabin-

man rushed towards Gandhiji's compartment and told Gandhiji: "Since all these years I was eagerly waiting for your *darshan*. My desire has been fulfilled today."

*

*

*

*

April 2

Messrs Abdul Qaiyum and Saadulla, the League gauleiters of the Frontier and Assam, arrived at the Viceroy's House for a joint conference with the Delegation. But one did not know the other. An amused official introduced them to each other and saved them from further embarrassment.

*

*

*

*

April 18

The prospect of the Delegation's ultimate success in their mission filled many hearts with hope, but at least one was absolutely panicky Nawab Bahram Ali Mirza of Lucknow (the great-grandson of late Nawab Wajid Ali Shah) put forward his claim for the kingdom of Oudh in the event of the British quitting India. Accompanied by a legal adviser, he took the first train to Delhi to press his claim before the Delegation.

*

*

*

*

April 30

Sir Stafford Cripps called on Gandhi camp in the early morning. An ex-I.N.A. soldier on volunteer's duty greeted him.

Cripps replied: "Good Morning."

Volunteer: "No Good Morning, Sir. This is India. Say 'Jai Hind'."

Sir Stafford gave a hearty smile and said 'Jai Hind' and shook hands with the volunteer

Pethick-Lawrence announces Cabinet Delegation in Lords

(February 19, 1946)

The House will recall that on September 19 last year, on his return to India after discussions with the British Government, the Viceroy made a statement of policy in the course of which he outlined the positive steps to be taken immediately after the Central and Provincial elections to promote in conjunction with leaders of Indian opinion the early realization of full self-government in India. Those steps include :

First, preparatory discussions with elected representatives of British India and with Indian States in order to secure the widest measure of agreement as to the method of framing a constitution ;

Second, the setting up of a constitution-making body ; and

Third, the bringing into being an executive council having the support of the main Indian parties.

Elections at the centre were held at the end of last year and in some of the provinces they are also over and responsible governments are in the process of formation. In other provinces polling dates are spread over the next few weeks. With the approach of the electoral campaign, the British Government have been considering the most fruitful method of giving effect to the programme to which I have referred.

In view of the paramount importance not only to India and to the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world of a successful outcome of discussions with leaders of Indian opinion the British Government have decided with the approval of His Majesty the

King to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers (Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Albert V. Alexandar) to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter. This decision has the full concurrence of Lord Wavell.

I feel sure that the House will give its support* and goodwill to the Ministers and the Viceroy in carrying out a task in which the future of 400,000,000 people and crucial issues both for India and the world will be at stake.

During the absence of these ministers, the Prime Minister will himself assume responsibility for Admiralty business and the Lord President (Mr. Herbert Morrison) will be in charge of the Board of Trade.

So far as the India and Burma Offices are concerned, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Major Arthur Henderson) will be in charge during my own absence, but he will be able to rely upon the personal advice of the Prime Minister whenever it is required and he will refer important issues to him, particularly those affecting Burma where the Government will not, like the Viceroy, be in personal touch with myself.

Attlee's statement in Commons

(March 15, 1946)

I find from our friends in this House who had been out to India and returned, from letters received from Indians and from Englishmen in India of all points of view, complete agreement on the fact that India is today in a state of great tension and that this is indeed a critical moment. I am quite sure that everyone in this House realizes the difficulty of the task which the members of the Mission have undertaken in conjunction with the Viceroy and that no one will desire to say anything whatever that will make that task more difficult.

It is time emphatically for a very definite and clear action. I do not intend to make a long speech. I do not think it would be wise to do so and in particular it would be most unhelpful to review the past. It is so easy to go back over the past, and in accordance with one's predilections to apportion blame for past failures in long-drawn out discussions on this extraordinarily difficult problem—the problem of development of India into a completely self-governing nation. In the long period of the past, it is so easy to point out and say that at this stage or that stage opportunities were missed by faults on one side or other.

I have had very close connection with this problem for nearly 20 years and I say there have been faults on both sides, but this time, we should look to the future rather than harp back to the past. Thus I would say it is no good applying the formula of the past to the present position. The temperature of 1946 is not the temperature of 1920, 1930 or even 1942. The slogans of earlier days are discarded. Sometimes, words that seemed at that time to Indians to express the height of their aspirations are now set on one side and other words and ideas thrust forward.

Nothing increases the pace and movement of public opinion more than a great war. Everyone who had anything to do with this question in the early days between the war knows what effect the war of 1914-18 had on Indian aspirations and ideas. The tide that runs comparatively slowly in peace becomes vastly accelerated in wartime, and especially directly afterwards, because that tide is to some extent banked up during war. I am quite certain that at the present time the tide of nationalism is running very fast in India and indeed all over Asia.

One always has to remember that India is affected

by what happens elsewhere in Asia. I remember when I was on the Simon Commission what effect the challenge that had been thrown out by Japan at that time had on the Asiatic people and the tide of nationalism that at one time seemed to be canalized among a comparatively small portion of the people of India, mainly a few of the educated classes, has tended to spread wider and wider.

I remember that in the Simon Commission report although there were great differences in expression of the nationalistic sentiment between what were called extremist and moderate and although in many instances there might be such stress of communal claims as may seem almost to exclude the conception of nationalism, we found that among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Marattahs, politicians or civil servants—among all of them—that conception of nationalism had been growing stronger and stronger and today I think that the national idea has spread right through, not the least perhaps among some of those soldiers who had done such wonderful service in the war.

I would like today, therefore, not to stress so much the differences between the Indians, but let us all realize that whatever the difficulties and divisions may be there is this underlying demand among all the Indian people.

There will be matters undoubtedly on which it is necessary to refer back for Cabinet decision but in our fluid position at the present time when we desire to get the utmost cooperation and goodwill between all leaders of Indian opinion it would be unwise to try and tie down those who are going out too rigidly.

The obvious reason for sending out the Cabinet Ministers is that you send out persons of responsibility who are able to take decisions. Of course, there must

be an area in which there may have to be a reference back.

It is worth remembering that twice in 25 years India has played a great part in the defeat of tyranny. Therefore, is it any wonder that today she claims—a nation of four hundred million people that twice sent her sons to die for freedom—that she should herself have freedom to decide her own destiny? (Cheers)

My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain that freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide, but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith a machinery for making that decision.

There you have met with the initial difficulty of getting that machinery set up, but we are resolved that a machinery shall be set up and we seek the utmost cooperation of all Indian leaders to do so.

India herself must choose as to what will be her future situation and her position in the world. Unity may come through the United Nations or through the Commonwealth, but no great nation can stand alone by herself without sharing what is happening in the world.

I hope that India may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantage in doing so, but if she does she must do it of her own free will, for the British Commonwealth and Empire are not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free people. If on the other hand she elects for independence—and in our view she has a right to do so—it will be for us to help make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.

I am well aware that when I speak of India I speak of a country containing congeries of races, religions and languages and I know well the difficulties thereby created but these difficulties can only be overcome by Indians.

We are mindful of the rights of the minorities and the minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of a majority. We cannot dictate how these difficulties shall be overcome. Our first duty is to get a machinery set up and that is the main purpose of the Ministerial Mission and the Viceroy.

We want to see set up an interim government—one of the purposes of the Bill which has been discussed to day—to give the Viceroy greater freedom in order that in the period which is to elapse while a constitution is being worked out, you may have a government enjoying the greatest possible support in India. I would not like to fetter the Viceroy's decision in any way in regard to the choice of portfolios.

In many Indian States, great advance has been made and there is a most interesting experiment in Travancore. Of course, feelings in India with regard to nationalism and the unity of India cannot be confined by boundaries that separate the States from the Provinces.

I am hoping that statesmen of Britain and of Princely India will be able to work out a solution of the problem of bringing together in one great polity the various constituent parts, and there again we must see that Indian States find their due place. I do not believe for a moment that the Indian Princes would desire to be a bar in the forward march of India.

This is a matter which Indians will settle them-

selves. I am very well aware of the minority problem in India. I think all Indian leaders are realizing more and more the need for getting a settlement of these minority problems if India is to have a smooth passage in future years and I believe that due provision will be made for them in the constitution.

The Mission will certainly not neglect this point. But you cannot make Indians responsible for governing themselves and at the same time retain over here the responsibility for treatment of minorities and powers of intervention on their behalf.

We are mindful too of the position of the Services and of the men who have done great service to India. India should be sensible of the responsibility she has to those who have served her.

Any interim government which takes over the assets of the Government will also take over the liabilities. That again is a point to be dealt with later on. It does not concern the immediate setting up of the Instrument of Decision.

With regard to the treaty, we are not going to hang out for anything for our own advantage which would be to the disadvantage of India.

Let me stress again the crucial nature of the task before us. This problem is of vital importance not only to India and the British Commonwealth and Empire but to the world.

In the mass of Asia, an Asia ravaged by war, we have here the one country that has been seeking to apply the principles of democracy. I have always felt myself that political India might be the light of Asia.

It is most unfortunate circumstance that just at the time when we have to deal with these great political issues there should be grave economic diffi-

cultures. In particular, we have very grave anxiety over India's food supply.

The House knows that the British Government are deeply concerned in this problem and the Minister of Food is now in the United States with the Indian Delegation. We shall do our utmost to help India.

I do not think I should refer to the social and economic difficulties except to say that I believe that these difficulties can only be solved by Indians themselves because they are so closely bound up with the whole Indian way of life and outlook. Whatever we can do to assist we shall do.

My colleagues are going out to India resolved to succeed and I am sure everyone will wish them god-speed.

Delegation's Proposals

(May 16, 1946)

1. On march 15, just before the despatch of the Cabinet Delegation to India, Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, used these words :—

My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her to attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible. What form of Government is to replace the present regime is for India to decide but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision.

x

x

x

I hope that India and her people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that they will find great advantages in doing so.

x

x

x

But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire are not bound together by chains of external compulsion. It is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.

2. Charged in these historic words we—the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy—have done our utmost to assist the two main political parties to reach agreement upon the fundamental issue of the unity or division of India. After prolonged discussions in New Delhi we succeeded in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together in conference at Simla. There was a full exchange of views and both parties were prepared to make considerable concessions in order to try and reach a settlement but it ultimately proved impossible to close the remainder of the gap between the parties and so no agreement could be concluded. Since no agreement has been reached we feel that it is our duty to put forward what we consider are the best arrangements possible to ensure a speedy setting up of the new constitution. This statement is made with the full approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom.

Interim Government

3. We have accordingly decided that immediate arrangements should be made whereby Indians may decide the future constitution of India and an Interim Government may be set up at once to carry on the administration of British India until such time as a new Constitution can be brought into being. We have endeavoured to be just to the smaller as well as to the larger sections of the people; and to recommend a

solution which will lead to a practicable way of governing the India of the future, and will give a sound basis for defence and a good opportunity for progress in the social, political and economic field.

4. It is not intended in this statement to review the voluminous evidence that has been submitted to the Mission ; but it is right that we should state that it has shown an almost universal desire, outside the supporters of the Muslim League, for the unity of India.

5. This consideration did not, however, deter us from examining closely and impartially the possibility of a partition of India ; since we were greatly impressed by the very genuine and acute anxiety of the Muslims lest they should find themselves subjected to a perpetual Hindu-majority rule.

This feeling has become so strong and widespread amongst the Muslims that it cannot be allayed by mere paper safeguards. If there is to be internal peace in India it must be secured by measures which will assure to the Muslims a control in all matters vital to their culture, religion, and economic or other interests.

6. We therefore examined in the first instance the question of a separate and fully independent sovereign State of Pakistan as claimed by the Muslim League. Such a Pakistan would comprise two areas ; one in the north-west consisting of the Provinces of the Punjab, Sind, North-West Frontier, and British Baluchistan ; the other in the north-east consisting of the Provinces of Bengal and Assam. The League were prepared to consider adjustment of boundaries at a later stage, but insisted that the principle of Pakistan should first be acknowledged.

The argument for a separate State of Pakistan was based, first, upon the right of the Muslim majority to decide their method of Government according to their

wishes, and, secondly, upon the necessity to include substantial areas in which Muslims are in a minority, in order to make Pakistan administratively and economically workable.

The size of the non-Muslim minorities in a Pakistan comprising the whole of the six Provinces enumerated above would be very considerable as the following figures* show :—

North-Western Area—

	Muslims	Non-Muslims
Punjab	16,217,242	12,201,577
North-West Frontier Province	2,788,797	249,270
Sind	3,208,325	1,326,683
Br. Baluchistan	438,930	62,701
	<hr/> 22,653,294 <hr/>	<hr/> 13,840,231 <hr/>
	62.07%	37.93%

North-Eastern Area—

Bengal	33,005,434	27,301,091
Assam	3,442,479	6,762,254
	<hr/> 36,447,913 <hr/>	<hr/> 34,063,345 <hr/>
	51.69%	48.31%

*All population figures in this statement are from the most recent census taken in 1941.

The Muslim minorities in the remainder of British India number some 20 million dispersed amongst a total population of 188 million.

Pakistan Impracticable

These figures show that the setting up of a separate sovereign State of Pakistan on the lines

claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the communal minority problem; nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan those districts of the Punjab, Bengal and Assam in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This point would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.

7. We, therefore, considered whether a smaller sovereign Pakistan confined to the Muslim majority areas alone might be a possible basis of compromise. Such a Pakistan is regarded by the Muslim League as quite impracticable because it would entail the exclusion from Pakistan of (a) the whole of the Ambala and Jullundur Divisions in the Punjab; (b) the whole of Assam except the district of Sylhet; and (c) a large part of Western Bengal, including Calcutta, in which city the Muslims form 23.6 per cent of the population. We ourselves are also convinced that any solution which involves a radical partition of the Punjab and Bengal, as this would do, would be contrary to the wishes and interests of a very large proportion of the inhabitants of these Provinces. Bengal and the Punjab each has its own common language and a long history and tradition. Moreover, any division of the Punjab would of necessity divide the Sikhs leaving substantial bodies of Sikhs on both sides of the boundary. We have, therefore, been forced to the conclusion that neither a larger nor a smaller sovereign State of Pakistan would provide an acceptable solution for the communal problem.

8. Apart from the great force of the foregoing arguments there are weighty administrative, economic and military considerations. The whole of the transportation and postal and telegraph systems of India

have been established on the basis of a united India. To disintegrate them would gravely injure both parts of India. The case for a united defence is even stronger. The Indian armed forces have been built up for the defence of India as a whole and to break them in two would inflict a deadly blow on the long traditions and high degree of efficiency of the Indian Army and would entail the gravest dangers. The Indian Navy and Indian Air force would become much less effective. The two sections of the suggested Pakistan contain the two most vulnerable frontiers in India and for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient.

9. A further consideration of importance is the greater difficulty which the Indian States would find in associating themselves with a divided British India.

10. Finally there is the geographical fact that the two halves of the proposed Pakistan State are separated by some seven hundred miles and the communications between them both in war and peace would be dependent on the goodwill of Hindustan.

11. We are, therefore, unable to advise the British Government that the power which at present resides in British hands should be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign States.

Congress Case

12. This decision does not, however, blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this, the Congress have put forward a scheme under which Provinces would have full autonomy subject

only to a minimum of Central subjects, such as Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

Under this scheme Provinces, if they wished to take part in economic and administrative planning on a large scale, could cede to the Centre optional subjects in addition to the compulsory ones mentioned above.

13. Such a scheme would, in our view, present considerable constitutional disadvantages and anomalies. It would be very difficult to work a Central Executive and Legislature in which some Ministers, who dealt with compulsory subjects, were responsible to the whole of India while other Ministers, who dealt with optional subjects, would be responsible only to those Provinces which had elected to act together in respect of such subjects. This difficulty would be accentuated in the Central Legislature, where it would be necessary to exclude certain members from speaking and voting when subjects with which their Provinces were not concerned were under discussion.

Apart from the difficulty of working such a scheme we do not consider that it would be fair to deny to other Provinces, which did not desire to take the optional subjects at the Centre, the right to form themselves into a group for a similar purpose. This would indeed be no more than the exercise of their autonomous powers in a particular way.

14. Before putting forward our recommendation we turn to deal with the relationship of the Indian States to British India. It is quite clear that with the attainment of independence by British India, whether inside or outside the British Commonwealth, the relationship which has hitherto existed between the Rulers of the States and the British Crown will no longer be possible. Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government.

This fact has been fully recognized by those whom we interviewed from the States. They have at the same time assured us that the States are ready and willing to co operate in the new development of India. The precise form which their co operation will take must be a matter for negotiation during the building up of the new constitutional structure, and it by no means follows that it will be identical for all the States. We have not, therefore, dealt with the States in the same detail as the Provinces of British India in the paragraphs which follow.

15. We now indicate the nature of a solution which in our view would be just to the essential claims of all parties, and would at the same time be *most likely to bring about a stable and practicable form of constitution for all India.*

Six Major Proposals

We recommend that the constitution should take the following basic form—

(1) There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the States, which should deal with the following subjects: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications; and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required for the above subjects.

(2) The Union should have an Executive and a Legislature constituted from British Indian and States representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the Legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities as well as a majority of all the members present and voting.

(3) All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the Provinces.

(4) The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.

(5) Provinces should be free to form Groups with executives and legislatures, and each Group could determine the Provincial subjects to be taken in common.

(6) The constitutions of the Union and of the Groups should contain a provision whereby any Province could, by a majority, vote of its Legislative Assembly, call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10 yearly intervals thereafter.

16. It is not our object to lay out the details of a constitution on the above lines, but to set in motion the machinery whereby a constitution can be settled by Indians for Indians.

It has been necessary, however, for us to make this recommendation as to the broad basis of the future constitution because it became clear to us in the course of our negotiations that not until that had been done was there any hope of getting the two major communities to join in the setting up of the constitution-making machinery.

Constituent Assembly

17. We now indicate the constitution-making machinery which we propose should be brought into being forthwith in order to enable a new constitution to be worked out.

18. In forming any Assembly to decide a new

Constitutional structure, the first problem is to obtain as broad-based and accurate a representation of the whole population as is possible. The most satisfactory method obviously would be by election based on adult franchise; but any attempt to introduce such a step would lead to a wholly unacceptable delay in the formulation of the new Constitution. The only practicable alternative is to utilize the recently elected Provincial Legislative Assemblies as the electing bodies.

There are, however, two factors in their composition which make this difficult. First, the numerical strengths of the Provincial Legislative Assemblies do not bear the same proportion to the total population in each Province. Thus, Assam with a population of 10 millions has a Legislative Assembly of 108 members, while Bengal, with a population six times as large, has an Assembly of only 250. Secondly, owing to the weightage given to minorities by the Communal Award, the strengths of the several communities in each Provincial Legislative Assembly are not in proportion to their numbers in the Province. Thus the number of seats reserved for Muslims in the Bengal Legislative Assembly is only 48% of the total, although they form 55% of the Provincial population. After a most careful consideration of the various methods by which these inequalities might be corrected, we have come to the conclusion that the fairest and most practicable plan would be—

- (a) to allot to each Province a total number of seats proportional to its population, roughly in the ratio of one to a million, as the nearest substitute for representation by adult suffrage.
- (b) to divide this provincial allocation of seats between the main communities in

each Province in proportion to their population.

- (c) to provide that the representatives allotted to each community in a Province shall be elected by the members of that community in its Legislative Assembly.

We think that for these purposes it is sufficient to recognize only three main communities in India; General, Muslim and Sikh, the "General" community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs. As the smaller minorities would, upon the population basis, have little or no representation since they would lose the weightage which assures them seats in the Provincial Legislatures, we have made the arrangements set out elsewhere below to give them a full representation upon all matters of special interest to the minorities.

19. (i) We, therefore, propose that there shall be elected by each Provincial Legislative Assembly the following numbers of representatives, each part of the Legislature (General, Muslim or Sikh) electing its own representatives by the method of proportional representation with the single transferable vote.

Table of Representation

Province	Section A.		
	General	Muslim	Total
Madras	45	4	49
Bombay	19	2	21
United Provinces	47	8	55
Bihar	31	5	36
Central Provinces	16	1	17
Orissa	9	0	9
Total	167	20	187

Section B.

Province	General	Muslim	Sikh	Total
Punjab	8	16	4	28
N.-W. F. P.	0	3	0	3
Sind	1	3	0	4
Total	9	22	4	35

Section C.

Province	General	Muslim	Total
Bengal	27	33	60
Assam	7	3	10
Total	34	36	70
Total for British India			292
Maximum for Indian States			93
Total			385

Note—In order to represent the Chief Commissioners Provinces there will be added to Section A the Member representing Delhi in the Central Legislative Assembly, the Member representing Ajmer-Merwara in the Central Legislative Assembly, and a representative to be elected by the Coorg Legislative Council. To Section B will be added a representative of British Baluchistan.

- (ii) It is the intention that the States should be given in the final Constituent Assembly appropriate representation which would not on the basis of the calculations adopted for British India exceed 93, but the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation. The States would in the preliminary stage be represented by a Negotiating Committee.
- (iii) The representatives thus chosen shall meet at New Delhi as soon as possible.
- (iv) A preliminary meeting will be held at which

the general order of business will be decided, a Chairman and other officers elected, and an Advisory Committee on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas set up. Thereafter, the provincial representatives will divide up into the three sections shown under A, B, and C. in the Table of Representation in sub-paragraph (i) of this paragraph.

- (v) These Sections shall proceed to settle the Provincial Constitutions for the Provinces included in each section, and shall also decide whether any Group Constitution shall be set up for those Provinces and, if so, with what provincial subjects the Group should deal. Provinces shall have the power to opt out of the Groups in accordance with the provisions of sub-clause (viii) below.
- (vi) The representatives of the Sections and the Indian States shall reassemble for the purpose of settling the Union Constitution.
- (vii) In the Union Constituent Assembly resolutions varying the provisions given elsewhere above or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities.

The Chairman of the Assembly shall decide which (if any) of the resolutions raise major communal issues and shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision.

- (viii) As soon as the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation, it shall be open to any Province to elect to come out of any Group in which it has been placed. Such a decision shall be taken by the new legislature of the Province after the first general election under the new constitution.

20. The Advisory Committee on the rights of citizens, minorities, and tribal and excluded areas should contain full representation of the interests affected, and their function will be to report to the Union Constituent Assembly upon the list of fundamental Rights, the clauses for the protection of minorities, and a scheme for the administration of the tribal and excluded areas, and to advise whether these rights should be incorporated in the Provincial, Group, or Union constitution.

States' Negotiating Committee

21. His Excellency the Viceroy will forthwith request the Provincial Legislatures to proceed with the election of their representatives and the States to set up a Negotiating Committee. It is hoped that the process of constitution-making can proceed as rapidly as the complexities of the task permit so that the interim period may be as short as possible.

22. It will be necessary to negotiate a Treaty between the Union Constituent Assembly and the United Kingdom to provide for certain matters arising out of the transfer of power.

23. While the constitution-making proceeds, the administration of India has to be carried on. We attach the greatest importance, therefore, to the setting up at once of an interim Government having the support of the major political parties. It is essential during the

interim period that there should be the maximum of co-operation in carrying through the difficult tasks that face the Government of India. Besides the heavy task of day-to-day administration, there is the grave danger of famine to be countered; there are decisions to be taken in many matters of post-war development which will have a far-reaching effect on India's future; and there are important international conferences in which India has to be represented.

For all these purposes a Government having popular support is necessary. The Viceroy has already started discussions to this end, and hopes soon to form an Interim Government in which all the portfolios, including that of War Member, will be held by Indian leaders having the full confidence of the people. The British Government, recognizing the significance of the changes in the Government of India, will give the fullest measure of cooperation to the Government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible.

24. To the leaders and people of India who now have the opportunity of complete independence we would finally say this. We and our Government and countrymen hoped that it would be possible for the Indian people themselves to agree upon the method of framing the new constitution under which they will live. Despite the labours which we have shared with the Indian Parties, and the exercise of much patience and goodwill by all, this has not been possible. We therefore now lay before you proposals which, after listening to all sides and after much earnest thought, we trust will enable you to attain your independence in the shortest time and with the least danger of internal disturbance and conflict. These

proposals may not, of course, completely satisfy all parties, but you will recognize with us that at this supreme moment in Indian history statesmanship demands mutual accommodation.

We ask you to consider the alternative to acceptance of these proposals. After all the efforts which we and the Indian Parties have made together for agreement, we must state that in our view there is small hope of peaceful settlement by agreement of the Indian Parties alone. The alternative would, therefore, be a grave danger of violence, chaos, and even civil war. The result and duration of such a disturbance cannot be foreseen; but it is certain that it would be a terrible disaster for many millions of men, women and children. This is a possibility which must be regarded with equal abhorrence by the Indian people, our own countrymen, and the world as a whole.

We therefore lay these proposals before you in the profound hope that they will be accepted and operated by you in the spirit of accommodation and goodwill in which they are offered. We appeal to all who have the future good of India at heart to extend their vision beyond their own community or interest to the interests of the whole four hundred millions of the Indian people.

We hope that the new independent India may choose to be a member of the British Commonwealth. We hope in any event that you will remain in close and friendly association with our people. But these are matters for your own free choice. Whatever that choice may be we look forward with you to your ever-increasing prosperity among the great nations of the world, and to a future even more glorious than your past.

Pethick-Lawrence Broadcasts Proposals

(May 16, 1946)

The words which I shall speak to you are concerned with the future of a great people—the people of India. There is a passionate desire in the hearts of Indians expressed by the leaders of all their political parties for independence. His Majesty's Government and the British people as a whole are fully ready to accord this independence whether within or without the British Commonwealth and hope that out of it will spring a lasting and friendly association between our two peoples on a footing of complete equality.

Nearly two months ago I, as Secretary of State for India, and my two Cabinet colleagues, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander, were sent out by His Majesty's Government to India to assist the Viceroy in setting up in India the machinery by which Indians can devise their own constitution. We were at once confronted with a major obstacle. The two principal parties—the Muslim League who won the great majority of the Muslim seats in the recent elections, and the Congress who won the majority of all the others—were opposed to one another as to the kind of machinery to be set up. The Muslim League claimed that British India should be divided into two completely separate sovereign states, and refused to take part in constitution-making unless this claim was conceded in advance. Congress insisted on one single united India.

During our stay in India we have tried by every means to secure such accommodation between the parties as would enable constitution-making to proceed. Recently we were able to bring them together at Simla in a conference with ourselves but though both sides were prepared to make substantial concessions,

it was not found possible to reach complete agreement. We have, therefore, been compelled ourselves to seek for a solution which by securing the main objects of both parties will enable constitution-making machinery to be brought into immediate operation.

While we recognize the reality of the fear of the Muslim League that in a purely unitary India their community with its own culture and way of life might become submerged in a majority Hindu rule, we do not accept the setting up of a separate Muslim sovereign state as a solution of the communal problem. Pakistan as the Muslim League would call their state would not consist solely of Muslims: it would contain a substantial minority of other communities which would average over 40 per cent and, in certain wide areas, would even constitute a majority, as for instance in the city of Calcutta where the Muslims form less than one-third of the population. Moreover, the complete separation of Pakistan from the rest of India would in our view gravely endanger the defence of the whole country by splitting the army into two and by preventing that defence in depth which is essential in modern war. We therefore do not suggest the adoption of this proposal.

Our own recommendations contemplate a constitution of three tiers at the top of which would be the Union of India with an executive and legislature empowered to deal with the essential subjects of external affairs, defence and communications and the finance necessary for these services. At the bottom would be the provinces which would have, apart from the subjects I have just named, complete autonomy. But we contemplate further that provinces will wish to unite together in groups to carry out, in common, services covering a wider area than that of a single

province; and these groups may have, if they wish, legislatures and executives which in that event will be intermediate between those of the provinces and those of the Union.

On this basis which makes it possible for the Muslims to secure the advantages of a Pakistan without incurring the dangers inherent in the division of India we invite Indians of all parties to take part in framing a constitution. The Viceroy will accordingly summon to New Delhi representatives of British India who will be elected by the members of the provincial legislatures in such a way that as nearly as possible for each one million of the population there will be one representative, and that the proportion between the representatives of the main communities will be on the same basis.

After a preliminary meeting in common, these representatives of the provinces will divide themselves up into three sections the composition of which is laid down and which, if the provinces ultimately agree, will become the three groups. These sections will decide upon provincial and group matters. Subsequently, they will re-unite to decide upon the constitution for the Union. After the first elections under the new constitution, provinces will be free to opt out of the group into which they have been provisionally placed.

We appreciate that this machinery does not of itself give any effective representation to other than the principal minorities and we are therefore providing for a special committee to be set up, in which the minorities will play a full part. The business of this committee will be to formulate fundamental and minority rights and to recommend their inclusion in the constitution at the appropriate level.

So far I have said nothing about the Indian States which comprise a third of the area of India and contain about one quarter of the whole population. These States at present are each separately governed and have individual relationships with the British Crown. There is general recognition that when British India attains independence the position of these States cannot remain unaffected, and it is anticipated that they will wish to take part in the constitution-making process and be represented in the all-India Union. It does not however lie within our province to decide these matters in advance as they will have to be the subject of negotiation with the States before action can be taken.

During the making of the constitution, the administration must be carried on and we attach therefore the greatest importance to the setting up at once of an interim Government having the support of the major political parties. The Viceroy has already started discussions to this end and he hopes to bring them shortly to a successful issue. During the interim period the British Government, recognizing the significance of the changes in the Government of India, will give the fullest measure of cooperation to the Government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible.

The essence of statecraft is to envisage the probable course of future events but no statesmen can be wise enough to frame a constitution which will adequately meet all the requirements of an unknown future. We may be confident therefore that the Indians on whom falls the responsibility of creating the initial constitution will give it a reasonable flexibility and will make provision for it to be revised and amended as required from time to time....

In this short talk you will not expect me to go into further details regarding our proposals which you can read in the statement which has been released for publication this evening. But in conclusion, I will repeat and emphasize what to me is the fundamental issue. The future of India and how that future is inaugurated are matters of vital importance not only to India herself but to the whole world. If a great new sovereign state can come into being in a spirit of mutual goodwill both within and without India, that of itself will be an outstanding contribution to world stability.

The Government and people of Britain are not only willing, they are anxious to play their full part in achieving this result. But the constitution for India has to be framed by Indians and worked by Indians when they have brought it into being. We appreciate to the full the difficulties which confront them in embarking on this task. We have done and we will continue to do all that lies in our power to help them to overcome these difficulties. But the responsibility and the opportunity is theirs and in their fulfilment of it we wish them godspeed.

Cripps Explains Proposals at a Press Conference

(May 16, 1946)

The first thing I want to point out is what the statement does not purport to do. Let me remind you that this is, not merely the Mission's statement, that is the statement of the four signatories, but is the statement of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. Now the statement does not purport to set out a new constitution for India. It is of no use asking us "how do you propose to do this or that?" The answer will be we don't propose to

do anything as regards decision upon a constitution, that is not for us to decide.

What we have had to do is to lay down one or two broad principles of how the constitution might be constructed and recommend those as foundations to the Indian people. You will notice we use the word 'recommend' with regard to the ultimate constitutional forms with which we deal. You may quite fairly ask : "But why do you recommend anything; why not leave it to the Indians ?" The answer is that we are most anxious to get all Indians into some constitution-making machinery as quickly as possible and the block at present is in this matter. We are, therefore, by this means trying to remove the block so that the constitution-making may start and progress freely and rapidly. We hope very earnestly that that will be the effect.

This matter of the interim Government is of supreme importance because of the enormous tasks facing India at the moment. It is these great tasks, and perhaps the greatest of them is to deal with the food situation, that make it absolutely essential that we should between us arrange a smooth and efficient transition,

Nothing could be more fatal to the Indian people today in the face of danger of famine than a breakdown of administration and communications anywhere in India, and that is why we stress as we do the vital need for cooperation between all parties and communities including the British in this time of transition.

British withdrawal

So much then for the vitally important point of the interim Government. Some of you wonder how soon this means that the British will sever their governmental connection with India—I hope that in any event we

shall remain the closest friends when Indian freedom comes. Well, we certainly can't say that. Who can foretell how quickly constitutions can be hammered out? One thing is, however, absolutely certain and this is the quicker you start the quicker you will end and the sooner we shall be able to withdraw, handing over the power to the new Governments of the Union, Provinces and, if it is so decided, of the Groups.

This brings me to what has been decided rather than recommended. It has been decided to make a start with the constitution-making right away. This does not mean a decision as to what the constitution shall finally be, that is for decision by the representatives of the Indian people. What it does mean is that the deadlock which has prevented a start on the process of constitution-making is to be removed once and for all.

The form in which we propose that the constitution-making bodies should be assembled is important for this reason. It permits of arriving at constitutions in the recommended form. It goes a little further than that in one respect.

As we believe and hope that the two parties will come into this constitution-making on the basis of our recommendations it would not be fair to either of them if the fundamental basis which we recommend could be easily departed from. So we stipulate that a departure from that basis which is laid down in paragraph 15 of the statement should only be made if a majority of both communities agree to it. That I think is eminently fair to both parties.

It does not mean that no departure can be made from the recommendations, but it does mean that the special provisions I have mentioned will apply to such resolutions in the Constituent Assembly of the Union.

That is one special provision as to particular majorities, the only other is in relation to matters raising any major communal issue when a similar rule will apply. All the rest is left to the free play of discussion and vote.

Let no one doubt for one moment our intentions. We have not come to India and stayed here so long and worked so hard except to carry out what has long been the policy of the British Labour Party and that is to transfer power to the Indian people as quickly, as smoothly and as cooperatively as the difficulties of the process permit.

We hope from the bottom of our hearts that the Indian people will accept the statement in the spirit of cooperation in which it has been drawn up, and that within a week or two the process of constitution-making may begin and the interim Government may be formed.

Churchill Pampers Minorities

(May 16, 1946)

After Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, had read in the House of Commons the statement issued by the Cabinet Delegation in India. Mr. Churchill, Leader of the Opposition, immediately rose and said : "I think the Prime Minister was right to read to the House the able but melancholy document to which we have listened, and that it was appropriate that he should read it instead of merely circulating it. Certainly I have heard nothing for a long time which so deeply deserves the attention of Parliament and the British nation. The respectful attention which the House gave to every word uttered by the Prime Minister is proof that this opinion is well-founded.

"The Prime Minister did me the courtesy of sending me a copy last night, but although I read it care-

fully in the small hours of the morning and I have now had the advantage of hearing it again, I should certainly not commit myself at this juncture to anything but observations of a most general character. I am bound to make it clear, however, without delay what is the position of the official Opposition. As the head of the Coalition Government, I and my colleagues of those days are committed to the offer made to the people of India at the time of the Cripps mission of 1942, by which we offered Dominion Status as expressed by the Statute of Westminster, including the right of secession.

“The Cripps Mission failed. The answer which Mr. Gandhi gave to the British Government at the time was ‘Quit India’. He and the Congress proceeded to raise or encourage a revolt or a widespread disturbance affecting principally communications on which the British and Indian forces relied for holding the threatened fronts.

Nevertheless we still persisted in our effort which had been rejected in 1942 and the late Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, on June 14 last, when Government had ceased to be coalition and was a Conservative Government, used the following words which were quoted by Mr. Eden when the proposal was made to send a Cabinet Mission to India in February.

Amery's Words Recalled.

“These are the words of Mr. Amery :

The statement makes clear that the offer of March 1942 stands in its entirety. That offer was based on two main principles. The first is that no limit is set to India's freedom to decide for herself her own destiny, whether as a free member and partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations, or even without it. The second principle is that this can only be

achieved under a constitution or constitutions framed by India, to which the main elements of India's national life are the consenting parties.

“By that statement we were and are bound. Now, however, a new situation has arisen, we are confronted with the fact, reiterated in the Prime Minister's statement, that there is no agreement. The main elements of Indian national life are not at present time consenting parties, to quote the words of Mr. Amery. No one will doubt the sincerity and earnestness with which the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy have laboured to bring about a solution of the Indian difficulty and worked for a solution with a zeal which would be natural were it to gain an empire and not to cast it away. But the fact is that they have failed, through no fault of their own, despite all their efforts and devotion and ingenuity, which is a fact which should be an education in Indian matters, not only in this country but throughout the world.

“During these negotiations it has been increasingly clear that the object sought for was not Dominion Status and the subsequent consequence of the right of secession, but direct and immediate independence. I am not sure that the results had been realized by the House—it certainly came as a surprise to me.

“The new proposals that we have had seem at first sight to shift the onus of deciding the future constitution of India from Indian parties to the British Government, who have themselves come forward with an elaborate and detailed scheme. In so far as this shifting of onus may prove to be the case it certainly seems to have been an unfortunate step which goes beyond what we understood was the purpose of the Ministers' Mission, the mandate they

received, which was defined by the Prime Minister as to set up machinery for Indians to decide their form of Government. It will, I hope, however, be common ground that we cannot enforce by British arms a British-made constitution upon Indians against the wishes of any of the main elements in Indian life.

“There remains the discharge of our obligations to Indian minorities and the States. We must study the documents with long and searching attention in order to see that these duties have been faithfully safeguarded.

“It would seem at first sight that attention should be particularly directed to the position of the Muslim community of nearly 80,000,000, already the most formidable of all races, and creeds in the Indian sub-continent, and whose interests and culture are a matter of great consequence to the community as a whole and vital to the peace of India.

“Secondly, we must examine the provision made for the Depressed Classes, or untouchables as they are called, who number nearly 6,000,000 and for whose status and future repeated assurances have been given and pledges made by many British Governments in ancient and more recent times.

“Finally, there are relations which the Indian States, which comprise a quarter of the population and one-third of the territory of the Indian sub-continent, are to have with the Crown and with the new Government. At present these relations are defined by solemn treaties, dependent upon the paramountcy of the Crown. Apparently, this is to be abolished. In a sentence which was obscure and could be either one thing or the other, they would be relegated to a kind of no-man's land—this question of paramountcy

—and if that is so, it would seem that all foundation for those treaties would be swept away. We do not even know at the present time what are the legislative steps which would be required either for the setting up of an Interim Government or in the event of an agreement being reached, what legislation would be necessary for the creation of a new constitution or abrogation of the King's title of Emperor of India. We know nothing of that. Therefore, I say in the name of the Opposition that a new situation has been created, that we are bound to review it in the light of the existing facts, and that we reserve our entire freedom of action as to the future course we should take."

Mr. Clement Davies, Leader of the Liberal Party, said: "This is not a moment to utter any thought which might in any way jeopardize or affect adversely the possibility of a satisfactory settlement being arrived at by all. I would only like to say that in the history of our relations with India for over 200 years our history has been honourable, one of which any people and any Government may justifiably be proud. We may have made mistakes, and have had our faults but never in the whole course of history can any Empire show such a fine record of tolerance, understanding and justice."

Mr. T. Reid (Labour), who served in the Ceylon Civil Service from 1905 to 1931, congratulated the Government on the imaginative way in which they had handled the problem from the outset. "As a friend of the Indian people and one who has eaten their salt, I hope that Indians will form a provisional government, set up their Constituent Assembly and develop their own constitution. I would say to the Indian people that the eyes so far of the world are upon them and it is for them now to set their own house in order."

Mr. William Gallacher (Communist): I know when the Cabinet Mission was going out the Prime Minister said something about independence for India, but when Imperialist members on the other side applauded this statement I felt a bit suspicious. I felt that somebody was not going to get a fair deal. In India you have two great bodies. You have what might be called a perpendicular division between the Muslims and the Congress, and we can see by the sort of campaign that is going on that a deliberate attempt is being made to aid that perpendicular division, not to get unity but to make a horizontal division and to win over the bourgeoisie. There should have been first a declaration of independence for India with a promise that in given time our troops would be out of India, and then a call on the Congress leaders to set up a Government.

Earl Winterton : What about Muslims ?

Mr. Gallacher : The Congress is a big majority. Let the Congress form a government, and they will bring in the Muslims.

Earl Winterton laughed.

Mr. Gallacher : I hope that one of the first things to be done when the Congress does form a government will be the abolition of the States and of the Princes. That is a proposal I would make in connection with this situation in India. If we are in earnest about giving Indians the right to set up their own government, let us hand the job over to them and come out and let them get ahead. If you do that you will get the real goodwill of the Indian people, and the Indian people will have no hesitation in voluntarily associating themselves with us.

Lords Debate

In the House of Lords the White Paper was read

by Lord Addison, the Dominions Secretary.

Viscount Simon (Conservative), the first speaker in the debate which followed, said: "Twice in the document there is reference to the setting up at once of an interim government. I want to be quite clear what is involved in that sphere, and I do not think it would embarrass Lord Addison if I asked that question, if by the setting up an interim government is meant that new men will be chosen to sit in the Viceroy's Council. That would not be a constitutional change. Or is it intended to make a rather more widespread change, If so, other questions arise. Under the Government of India Act of 1935 the Viceroy has what are called reserve powers and special responsibilities. I would like to be assured that when this document, put forward with the authority of Government, speaks of setting up or creating an interim government, it does not mean that there is to be attempted some modification, either explicit or implicit, in these constitutional provisions.

"There is cast upon the Viceroy under the existing constitution the particular duty of protecting the minorities; the duty, if occasion calls for it, of certifying legislation from Indian Legislative bodies; and of overruling or taking upon himself to decide grave matters which are not being satisfactorily dealt with".

Lord Addison, replying, said: "The answer to Lord Simon's question is, I think, fairly clear. It is more a change of personnel which we hope will be effected agreeably and satisfactorily, and will inspire confidence. The powers and duties of the Viceroy will remain as before".

Lord Simon: "Otherwise it would have meant an Act of Parliament."

Lord Addison: "Yes "

Viceroy's Broadcast

(May 17, 1946)

I speak to the people of India at the most critical hour of India's history. The statement of the Cabinet Delegation containing their recommendations has now been before you for twenty-four hours. It is a blue-print for freedom, an outline of which your representatives have to fill in the details and construct the building.

You will have studied the statement, most of you, and may perhaps already have formed your opinion on it. If you think that it shows a path to reach the summit at which you have been aiming for so long, the independence of India, I am sure you will be eager to take it. If you should have formed the view—I hope you have not—that there is no passage that way, I hope that you will study again the route indicated to you, and see whether the difficulties in the path—and we know they are formidable—cannot be surmounted by skill and patience and boldness.

I can assure you of this, that very much hard work, very much earnest study, very much anxious thought, and all the goodwill and sincerity at our command have gone to the making of these recommendations. We would much have preferred that the Indian leaders should have themselves reached agreement on the course to be followed, and we have done our best to persuade them; but it has not been found possible, in spite of concessions on both sides which at one time promised results.

India's unity assured

These proposals put before you are obviously not those that any one of the parties would have chosen if left to itself; but I do believe that they offer a reasonable and workable basis on which to found

India's future constitution, They preserve the essential unity of India which is threatened by the dispute between the two major communities; and in especial they remove the danger of the disruption of that great fellowship, the Indian Army, to which India already owes so much and on whose strength, unity and efficiency her future security will depend. They offer to the Muslim community the right to direct their own essential interests, their religion, their education, their culture, their economic and other concerns in their own way and to their own best advantage. To another great community, the Sikhs, they preserve the unity of their homeland, the Punjab, in which they have played and can still play so important and influential a part.

They provide, in the Special Committee which forms a feature of the constitution-making machinery, the best chance for the smaller minorities to make their needs known and to secure protection for their interests. They seek to arrange a means for the Indian States, great and small, to enter by negotiation into the polity of a united India. They offer to India the prospect of peace—a peace from party strife, the peace so needed for all the constructive work there is to do. And they give you the opportunity of complete independence so soon as the Constituent Assembly has completed its labours.

I would like to emphasize the constructive work to be done. If you can agree to accept the proposals in the statement as a reasonable basis on which to work out your constitution, then we are able at once to concentrate all the best efforts and abilities in India on the short-term problems that are so urgent. You know them well—the immediate danger of famine to be countered, and measures taken to provide more food for everyone in future years; the health of

India to be remedied ; great schemes of wider education to be initiated ; roads to be built and improved ; and much else to be done to raise the standard of living of the common man.

There are also great schemes in hand to control India's water supplies, to extend irrigation, to provide power, to prevent floods ; there are factories to be built and new industries to be started : while in the outside world India has to take her place in international bodies, in which her representatives have already established a considerable reputation.

It is therefore my earnest desire that in these critical times ahead, in the interim period while the new Constitution is being built, the Government of India should be in the hands of the ablest of India's leaders, men recognized as such by the Indian people, whom they will trust to further their interests and bring them to their goal.

As said in the Statement, I am charged with the responsibility to form such a Government as soon as possible, to direct the affairs of British India in the interim period. There will be no doubt in the minds of anyone, I hope, how great a step forward this will be on India's road to self-government. It will be a purely Indian Government except for its head, the Governor-General; and will include, if I can get the men I want, recognized leaders of the main Indian parties, whose influence, ability and desire to serve India are unquestioned.

Such a Government must have a profound influence and power not only in India, but also in the outside world. Some of the best ability in India, which has hitherto been spent in opposition can be harnessed to constructive work. These men can be the architects of the new India.

No constitution and no form of Government can work

satisfactorily without goodwill; with goodwill and determination to succeed even an apparently illogical arrangement can be made to work. In the complex situation that faces us there are four main parties: the British; the two main parties in British India, Hindus and Muslims; and the Indian States. From all of them very considerable change of their present outlook will be required as a contribution to the general good, if this great experiment is to succeed. To make concession in ideas and principles is a hard thing and not easily palatable. It requires some greatness of mind to recognize the necessity, much greatness of spirit to make the concession. I am sure that this will not be found wanting in India, as I think you will admit that it has not been found wanting in the British people in this offer.

I wonder whether you realize that this is the greatest and most momentous experiment in Government in the whole history of the world—a new Constitution to control the destiny of 400,000,000 people. A grave responsibility indeed on all of us who are privileged to assist in making it.

Lastly, I must emphasize the seriousness of the choice before you. It is the choice between peaceful construction or the disorder of civil strife, between cooperation or disunity, between ordered progress or confusion. I am sure you will not hesitate in your choice for cooperation.

May I end with some words which were quoted by one great man to another at a crisis of the late war, and may well be applied to India at this crisis:

"Thou too sail on, O Ship of State,
Sail on, O Union, strong and great:
Humanity with all its fears
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate."

C.-in-C. Addresses Armed Forces

(May 17, 1946)

As you have heard from the Viceroy, the British Government have put forward a scheme to enable Indians to make their own constitution and set up an independent Indian Government. As you all know, too, members of the British Government and the Viceroy have for some time past been discussing with the leaders of the Muslim League and of the Congress. They have been trying to decide what kind of Government shall be set up in India. Their object is to make good the promise of the British Government that in future India shall be governed entirely by her own people, free from all control by Britain, and free to remain within the British Commonwealth or to go outside if she likes.

The British Government, therefore, have approved neither the setting up of completely separate states, nor the retention of all power at the centre. They consider that although the different areas should have a large measure of independence if the people desire it, the responsibility for the Army, Navy and Air Force and for the defence of the whole of India in war, must rest with one authority for the whole of India,

To carry on the administration of the country while a new system of Government is worked out, the Viceroy proposes to form an interim Government composed of himself and of leaders of Indian political opinion who have the confidence of the people.

In this temporary Government the post of War Member which is at present held by the Commander-in-Chief (that is, myself), will be held by a civilian who will be an Indian. I shall continue to be responsible for the command and welfare of the Army, Navy and Air Force but all political matters

They realize that it would be useless to ask the two Parties to meet unless they were able to place before them a basis of negotiation which could lead to such an agreement.

I am, therefore, asked to invite the Muslim League to send four negotiators to meet the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy together with a similar number from the Congress Working Committee with a view to discussing the possibility of agreement upon the following fundamental principles:

The future constitutional structure of British India to be as follows:

A Union Government dealing with the following subjects:—

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications.

There will be two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim Provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the provinces in the respective groups desire to be dealt with in common. The Provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights.

It is contemplated that the Indian States will take their appropriate place in this structure on terms to be negotiated with them.

I would point out that we do not think it either necessary or desirable further to elaborate these principles as all other matters could be dealt with in the course of the negotiations.

If the Muslim League and Congress are prepared to enter into negotiations on this basis, you will perhaps be so good as to let me know the names of the four people appointed to negotiate on their behalf. As soon as I receive these I will let you know the locus of the negotiations which will in all probability be in Simla, where the climate will be more temperate.

Letter from the President of the Congress to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, dated April 28, 1946.

I thank you for your letter of April 27. I have consulted my colleagues of the Congress. Working Committee in regard to the suggestion made by you, and they desire me to inform you that they have always been willing to discuss fully any matters concerning the future of India with representatives of the Muslim League or any other organization. I must point out, however, that the "fundamental principles" which you mention require amplification and elucidation in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

As you are aware, we have envisaged a Federal Union of autonomous units. Such a Federal Union must of necessity deal with certain essential subjects of which defence and its allied subjects are the most important. It must be organic and must have both an executive and legislative machinery as well as the finance relating to these subjects and the power to raise revenues for these purposes in its own right. Without these functions and powers it would be weak and disjointed and defence and progress in general would suffer. Thus among the common subjects in addition to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications, there should be Currency, Customs, Tariffs and such other subjects as may be found on closer scrutiny to be intimately allied to them.

Your reference to two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim provinces, is not clear. The only predominantly Muslim Provinces are the North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. Bengal and Punjab have a bare Muslim majority. We consider it wrong to form groups of Provinces under the Federal Union and more so on religious or communal basis. It also appears that you leave no choi

to a Province in the matter of joining or not joining a group. It is by no means certain that a Province as constituted would like to join any particular group. In any event it would be wholly wrong to compel a Province to function against its own wish. While we agree to the Provinces having full powers in regard to all remaining subjects as well as the residuary powers, we have also stated that it should be open to any Province to exercise its option to have more common subjects with the Federal Union. Any sub-federation within the Federal Union would weaken the Federal Centre and would be otherwise wrong. We do not, therefore, favour any such development.

Regarding the Indian States we should like to make it clear that we consider it essential that they should be parts of the Federal Union in regard to the common subjects mentioned above. The manner of their coming into the Union can be considered fully later. You have referred to certain "fundamental principles" but there is no mention of the basic issue before us, that is, Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India. It is only on this basis that we can discuss the future of India, or any interim arrangement. While we are ready to carry on negotiations with any party as to the future of India, we must state our convictions that reality will be absent from any negotiations whilst an outside ruling power still exists in India.

I have asked three of my colleagues of the Congress Working Committee, namely, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, to accompany me in any negotiations that may take place as a result of your suggestion.

Letter from the President of the Muslim League to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, dated April 29, 1946.

I thank you for your letter of April 27, which I placed before my Working Committee yesterday morning. My colleagues and I fully appreciate the further attempt that the Cabinet Mission and His Excellency the Viceroy are making to bring about an agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress by proposing a meeting of the representatives of the two organizations for the purpose of negotiating an agreement. They, however, desire me to invite your attention to the position taken up by the Muslim League since the passing of the Lahore Resolution in 1940 and, thereafter, successively endorsed by the All-India Muslim League sessions and again by the Convention of the Muslim League Legislators, as recently as April 9, 1946, as per copy enclosed.

The Working Committee desire to point out that many important matters, both of principle and detail, in your brief letter, require elucidation and clarification, which, in their opinion, can be achieved at the meeting proposed by you. Therefore, without prejudice of commitment, the Working Committee in their anxiety to assist in finding an agreed solution of the Indian constitutional problem, have authorized me to nominate three representatives on behalf of the Muslim League to participate in the negotiations.

The following are the four names: (1) Mr. M. A. Jinnah, (2) Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, (3) Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and (4) Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar.

(For League Legislators' Convention resolution see earlier chapter)

Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the President of the Congress, dated April 29, 1946.

Thank you for your letter of April 28. The Cabinet Delegation are very glad to know that the Congress

agree to enter the joint discussion with representatives of the Muslim League and ourselves. We have taken note of the views you have expressed on behalf of the Working Committee of Congress. These appear to deal with matters which can be discussed at the Conference, for we have never contemplated that acceptance by Congress and the Muslim League of our invitation would imply as a preliminary condition full approval by them of the terms set out in my letter. These terms are our proposed basis for any settlement and what we have asked the Congress Working Committee to do is to agree to send its representatives to meet ourselves and representatives of the Muslim League in order to discuss it.

Assuming that the Muslim League, whose reply we expect to receive in the course of the afternoon, also accept our invitation, we propose that these discussions should be held at Simla, and intend to move there ourselves on Wednesday next. We hope that you will be able to arrange for the Congress representatives to be in Simla in time to open the discussions on the morning of Thursday, May 2.

Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the President of the Muslim League, dated April 29, 1946.

Thank you for your letter of April 29. The Cabinet Delegation are very glad to know that the Muslim League agree to enter the joint discussion with the representatives of the Congress and ourselves. I am glad to say I have received a letter from the President of the Congress to say that they are also willing to participate in the proposed discussions and have nominated Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan as their representatives.

We have taken note of the resolution of the Muslim League to which you draw our attention. We have

never contemplated that acceptance by the Muslim League and the Congress of our invitation would imply as a preliminary condition full approval by them of the terms set out in my letter. These terms are our proposed basis for a settlement and what we have asked the Muslim League Working Committee to do is to agree to send its representatives to meet ourselves and representatives of the Congress in order to discuss it. We propose that these discussions should be held at Simla and intend to move there ourselves on Wednesday next. We hope that you will be able to arrange for the Muslim League representatives to be in Simla in time to open the discussions on the morning of Thursday, May 2.

AGENDA

(1) Groups of Provinces: (a) composition; (b) method of deciding Group subjects and (c) character of Group organization.

(2) Union: (a) Union subjects; (b) character of Union Constitution and (c) finance.

(3) Constitution-making machinery: (a) composition; and (b) functions (i) in respect of Union (ii) in respect of Groups and (iii) in respect of Provinces.

Letter from the President of Congress to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, dated May 6, 1946,

My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading up to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not deceive ourselves, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the

conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28. We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. We realize that some assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which ignore or run contrary to fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.

In my letter of April 28, I stated that the basic issue before us was that of Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British Army from India, for there can be no independence so long as there is a foreign army on Indian soil. We stand for the independence of the whole of India now and not, in the distant or near future. Other matters are subsidiary to this and can be fitly discussed and decided by the Constituent Assembly.

At the conference yesterday I referred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the conference, accepted Indian independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the Constituent Assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now and that is the acceptance of Indian independence now. If that is so, then certain consequences inevitably follow. We felt yesterday that there was no appreciation of these consequences. A Constituent Assembly is not going to decide the question of independence; that question must be and, we take it, has been decided now. That Assembly will represent the will of the free Indian nation and give effect to it. It is not going to be bound by any prev-

ious arrangements. It has to be preceded by a Provisional Government which must function, as far as possible, as a government of free India, and which should undertake to make all arrangements for the transitional period.

In our discussions yesterday repeated references were made to "groups" of Provinces functioning together, and it was even suggested that such a group would have an executive and legislative machinery. This method of grouping has not so far been discussed by us but still our talks seemed to presume all this. I should like to make it very clear that we are entirely opposed to any executive or legislative machinery for a group of Provinces or units of the Federation. That will mean a sub-federation, if not something more, and we have already told you that we do not accept this. It would result in creating three layers of executive and legislative bodies, an arrangement which will be cumbrous, static and disjointed, leading to continuous friction. We are not aware of any such arrangement in any country.

We are emphatically of opinion that it is not open to the conference to entertain any suggestions for a division of India. If this is to come, it should come through the constituent Assembly free from any influence of the present governing power. Another point we wish to make clear is that we do not accept the proposal for parity as between groups in regard to the executive or legislature. We realize that everything possible should be done to remove fears and suspicions from the mind of every group and community. But the way to do this is not by unreal methods which go against the basic principles of democracy on which we hope to build up our constitution.

Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the Presidents of the Muslim League and the Congress dated May 8, 1946.

My colleagues and I have been thinking over the best method of laying before the conference what in our judgment seems the most likely basis of agreement as shown by the deliberations so far.

We have come to the conclusion that it will be for the convenience of the parties if we commit this to writing and send them confidential copies before the conference meets again. We hope to be in a position to let you have this in the course of the morning. But as this will give you too short a time to study it adequately before the proposed resumption of the conference at 3 o'clock this afternoon, I feel sure that you will agree that the meeting be postponed until the same hour (3 o'clock) tomorrow afternoon, Thursday, May 9, and I hope that you will concur in this change of time which, we are convinced, is in the interests of all parties.

Letter from the Private Secretary to Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the Presidents of the Congress and the Muslim League, dated May 8, 1946.

With reference to the Secretary of State's letter to you this morning, the Cabinet Delegation wish me to send to you the enclosed document which is the paper to which the Secretary of State referred. The Delegation propose that this paper should be discussed at the next meeting to be held on Thursday afternoon at 3 p.m. if that is agreeable to the Congress-Muslim League delegates.

(Enclosure with letter of May 8)

Suggested points for agreement between the representatives of Congress and the Muslim League :

(1) There shall be an all-India Union Government and Legislature dealing with Foreign Affairs, Defence, Communications, Fundamental Rights and having the necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects.

(2) All the remaining powers shall vest in the Provinces.

(3) Groups of Provinces may be formed and such Groups may determine the Provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

(4) The Groups may set up their own executives and legislatures.

(5) The Legislature of the Union shall be composed of equal proportions from the Muslim-majority Provinces and from the Hindu-majority Provinces whether or not these or any of them have formed themselves into groups; together with representatives of the States.

(6) The Government of the Union shall be constituted in the same proportion as the Legislature.

(7) The constitutions of the Union and the Groups (if any) shall contain a provision whereby any Province can by a majority vote of its Legislative Assembly call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of 10 years and at 10-yearly intervals thereafter.

For the purpose of such reconsideration a body shall be constituted on the same basis as the original Constituent Assembly and with the same provisions as to voting and shall have power to amend the constitution in any way decided upon.

(8) The constitution-making machinery to arrive at a constitution on the above basis shall be as follows :

(a) Representatives shall be elected from each Provincial Assembly in proportion to the strengths of the various parties in that Assembly on the basis of 1/10th of their numbers.

(b) Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the

representation from British India.

(c) The Constituent Assembly so formed shall meet at the earliest date possible in New Delhi.

(d) After its preliminary meeting at which the general order of business will be settled, it will divide into three sections, one section representing the Hindu-majority Provinces, one section representing the Muslim-majority Provinces and one representing the States.

(e) The first two sections will then meet separately to decide the Provincial constitutions for their Group and, if they wish, a Group constitution.

(f) When these have been settled it will be open to any Province to decide to opt out of its original Group and into the other Group or to remain outside any Group.

(g) Thereafter the three bodies will meet together to settle the constitution for the Union on the lines agreed in paragraphs 1—7 above.

(h) No major point in the Union constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the Assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour,

(9) The Viceroy shall forthwith call together the above constitution-making machinery which shall be governed by the provisions stated in paragraph 8 above.

Letter from the President of the Muslim League to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, dated May 8, 1946.

I have now received the letter of your Private Secretary, dated May 8, 1946, and the enclosed document to which you had referred in your earlier letter of May 8, 1946. It is proposed by you that this "paper" be discussed at the next meeting of the conference to

be held on Thursday afternoon at 3 p.m. if this is agreeable to the Muslim League Delegation.

Your proposal embodied in your letter of April 27, 1946, runs as follows:

"A Union Government dealing with the following subjects—Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication. There will be two groups of Provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu Provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim Provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the Provinces in the respective Groups desire to be dealt with in common. The Provincial Governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all residuary sovereign rights."

This matter was to be discussed at Simla and we agreed to attend the Conference on Sunday, May 5, 1946, on the terms of my letter, dated April 28, 1946. You were good enough to explain your formula and then after hours of discussion on May 5 and 6, the Congress finally and definitely turned down the proposed Union confined only to three subjects even with power to levy contribution for financing the Union. Next, your formula clearly envisaged an agreement precedent between the Congress and the Muslim League with regard to the grouping of Muslim and Hindu Provinces and the formation of two Federations of the Grouped Provinces and it followed that there must be two constitution-making machineries. It was on that basis that some kind of Union was suggested in your formula confined only to three subjects and our approval was sought in order to put into this skeleton blood and flesh. This proposal was also categorically turned down by the Congress and the meeting had to be adjourned for the Mission to consider the matter further as to what steps they may take in the matter.

And now the new enclosed document has been

sent to us with a view that "this paper should be discussed at the next meeting to be held on Thursday afternoon at 3 p.m." The heading of the paper is "Suggested Points for Agreement Between the Representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League". By whom are they suggested, it is not made clear. We are of the opinion that the new suggested points for agreement are a fundamental departure from the original formula embodied in your letter of April 27, which was rejected by the Congress.

To mention some of the important points, we are now asked to agree that there should be one all-India Union Government in terms of paragraphs 1—7 of this paper, which adds one more subject to be vested in the Union Government, i.e., "Fundamental Rights" and it is not made clear whether the Union Government and Legislature will have power or not to obtain for itself the finances by means of taxation.

In the new "suggestions" the question of grouping of Provinces is left exactly as the Congress spokesmen desired in the course of discussions that have taken place hitherto, and is totally different from your original formula. That there should be a single constitution-making body, we can never agree to; nor can we agree to the method of formation of constitution-making machineries suggested in the paper. There are many other objectionable features contained in the suggestions which we have not dealt with as we are only dealing with the main points arising out of this paper. In these circumstances, we think, no useful purpose will be served to discuss this paper, as it is a complete departure from your original formula, unless after what we have said above you still desire us to discuss it in the conference itself tomorrow.

Letter from Lord Pethick-Lawrence to the President of the Muslim League, dated May 9, 1946.

I have to acknowledge your letter of yesterday which I have shown to my colleagues. In it you raise a number of issues to which I propose to reply in order.

(1) You claim that Congress "finally and definitely turned down the proposed Union confined only to three subjects even with power to levy contribution for financing the Union". This statement is not in accord with my recollection of what took place in the conference room. It is true that the Congress representatives expressed their view that the limitation was too narrow and argued further that even so limited it necessarily included certain ancillary matters. Up to a point you recognized that there was some force in the argument because you agreed, as I understood, that some power to obtain the necessary finance must be given. There was no final decision on this matter (or of course on any other).

(2) Next, you claim, if I understand you aright, that our reference to the formation of Groups is at variance with the formula in our invitation. I am afraid I cannot accept this view. It is of course a slightly amplified form because it specifies the manner in which the Provinces can decide as to joining any particular Group. This amplified form is put forward by us as a reasonable compromise between the views of the Muslim League and those originally expressed by Congress against grouping at all.

(3) You further take exception to the machinery that we suggest should be set up for making the constitution. I would point out to you, however, that you yourself in explaining how your two constitution-making bodies would work agreed on Tuesday last in the conference that they would have to join together in the end to decide the constitution of the Union and you took no exception to their having a preliminary session

in common to decide procedure. What we are proposing is in fact precisely the same thing expressed in different words. I am, therefore, quite at a loss to understand what you have in mind when you use the words "this proposal was also categorically turned down by the Congress."

(4) In your next succeeding paragraph you ask who it is that makes the suggestions that are contained in the document I sent you. The answer is the Cabinet Mission and His Excellency the Viceroy who make them in our endeavour to bridge the gap between the viewpoints of the Congress and the Muslim League.

(5) You next take exception to our departing from the original formula in my invitation. I would remind you that in accepting my original invitation neither the Muslim League nor the Congress bound itself to accept in full the original formula, and in my reply of April 29, I wrote these words :

"We have never contemplated that acceptance by the Muslim League and the Congress of our invitation would imply as a preliminary condition full approval by them of the terms set out in my letter. These terms are our proposed basis for a settlement and what we have asked the Muslim League Working Committee to do is to agree to send its representatives to meet ourselves and representatives of the Congress in order to discuss it."

Indeed this is the only sensible attitude because the object of all our discussions is to explore every conceivable possibility of reaching agreement.

(6) "Fundamental Rights" were included by us in our suggestions for addition to the list of Union subjects because it seemed to us that it would be of benefit both to the large communities and to the small minorities for them to be put in and accordingly to be worthy of consideration in our conference. As to Finance

it will, of course, be quite open to discuss in the conference the precise significance of the inclusion of this word in its context.

(7) Your two following paragraphs are mainly a recapitulation of your previous arguments and have been already dealt with above.

From your last paragraph I understand that though you do not consider in the circumstances that any good purpose would be served by the attendance of the Muslim League delegation at the conference fixed for this afternoon, you are willing to come if we express a desire that you should do so. My colleagues and I wish to obtain the views of both parties on the document submitted and, therefore, would be glad to see you at the conference.

Letter from the President of the Congress to Lord Pethick-Lawrence, dated May 9, 1946.

My colleagues and I have given the most careful consideration to the memorandum sent by you yesterday suggesting various points of agreement. On April 28, I sent you a letter in which I explained briefly the Congress view-point in regard to certain "fundamental principles" mentioned in your letter of April 27. After the first day of the conference, on May 6, I wrote to you again to avoid any possible misunderstanding regarding the issues being discussed in the conference.

I now find from your memorandum that some of your suggestions are entirely opposed to our views and to the views repeatedly declared by the Congress. We are thus placed in a difficult position. It has been and is our desire to explore every avenue for a settlement and a change-over in India by consent, and for this purpose we are prepared to go far. But there are obvious limits beyond which we cannot go if we are

convinced that this would be injurious to the people of India and to India's progress as a free nation.

In my previous letters I have laid stress on the necessity of having a strong and organic Federal Union. I have also stated that we do not approve of sub-federations or grouping of Provinces in the manner suggested, and are wholly opposed to parity in executives or legislatures as between wholly unequal Groups. We do not wish to come in the way of Provinces or other units cooperating together, if they so choose, but this must be entirely optional.

The proposals you have put forward are meant, we presume, to limit the free discretion of the Constituent Assembly. We do not see how this can be done. We are at present concerned with one important aspect of a larger problem. Any decision on this aspect taken now might well conflict with the decisions we, or the Constituent Assembly, might want to take on other aspects. The only reasonable course appears to us is to have a Constituent Assembly with perfect freedom to draw up its constitution, with certain reservations to protect the rights of minorities. Thus we may agree that any major communal issue must be settled by consent of the parties concerned, or, where such consent is not obtained, by arbitration.

From the proposals you have sent us (8 d.e.f.g) it would appear that two or three separate constitutions might emerge for separate Groups, joined together by a flimsy common super-structure left to the mercy of the three disjointed Groups. There is also compulsion in the early stages for a Province to join a particular Group whether it wants to or not. Thus why should the Frontier Province, which is clearly a Congress Province, be compelled to join any Group hostile to the Congress? We realize that in dealing with human beings, as individuals or groups, many considera-

tions have to be borne in mind besides logic and reason. But logic and reason cannot be ignored altogether, and unreason and injustice are dangerous companions at any time and, more especially, when we are building for the future of hundreds of millions of human beings.

New suggestions

I shall now deal with some of the points in your memorandum and make some suggestions in regard to them.

No. 1.—We note that you have provided for the Union to have necessary powers to obtain for itself the finance it requires for the subjects it deals with. We think it should be clearly stated that the Federal Union must have power to raise revenues in its own right. Further that currency and customs must in any event be included in the Union subjects, as well as such other subjects as on closer scrutiny may be found to be intimately allied to them. One other subject is an essential and inevitable Union subject and that is Planning. Planning can only be done effectively at the Centre, though the Provinces or units will give effect to it in their respective areas.

The Union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

Nos. 5 and 6.—We are entirely opposed to the proposed parity, both in the executive and legislature, as between wholly unequal Groups. This is unfair and will lead to trouble. Such a provision contains in itself the seed of conflict and the destruction of free growth. If there is no agreement on this or any similar matter, we are prepared to leave it to arbitration.

No. 7.—We are prepared to accept the suggestion that

provision be made for a reconsideration of the constitution after ten years. Indeed the constitution will necessarily provide the machinery for its revision at any time.

The second clause lays down that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the Constituent Assembly. This present provision is intended to meet an emergency. We expect that the constitution for India will be based on adult suffrage. Ten years hence India is not likely to be satisfied with anything less than adult suffrage to express its mind on all grave issues.

No. 8-a.—We would suggest that the just and proper method of elections, fair to all parties, is the method of proportional representation by single transferable vote. It might be remembered that the present basis of election for the Provincial Assemblies is strongly weighted in favour of the minorities.

The proportion of 1/10th appears to be too small and will limit the numbers of the Constituent Assembly too much. Probably the number would not exceed 200. In the vitally important tasks the Assembly will have to face, it should have larger numbers. We suggest that at least one-fifth of the total membership of the Provincial Assemblies should be elected for the Constituent Assembly.

No. 8-b.—This clause is vague and requires elucidation. But for the present we are not going into further details.

No. 8-d,e,f,g.—I have already referred to these clauses. We think that both the formation of these Groups and the procedure suggested are wrong and undesirable. We do not wish to rule out the formation of the Groups if the Provinces so desire. But this subject must be left open for decision by the Con-

stituent Assembly. The drafting and settling of the constitution should begin with the Federal Union. This should contain common and uniform provisions for the Provinces and other units. The Provinces may then add to these.

No. 8-h.—In the circumstances existing today we are prepared to accept some such clause. In case of disagreement the matter should be referred to arbitration.

I have pointed out above some of the obvious defects, as we see them, in the proposals contained in your memorandum. If these are remedied, as suggested by us, we might be in a position to recommend their acceptance by the Congress. But as drafted in the memorandum sent to us, I regret that we are unable to accept them. On the whole, therefore, if the suggestion are intended to have a binding effect, with all the will in the world to have an agreement with the League, we must repudiate most of them. Let us not run into any evil greater than the one all of us three Parties should seek to avoid. If an agreement honourable to both the parties and favourable to the growth of free and united India cannot be achieved, we would suggest that an Interim Provisional Government responsible to the elected members of the Central Assembly be formed at once and the matters in dispute concerning the Constituent Assembly between the Congress and the League be referred to an independent tribunal.

After a proposal by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that an umpire should be appointed to settle matters of difference between the parties the Conference, understanding that there was a likelihood of agreement on an umpire between the parties, was adjourned and the following correspondence passed between the parties.

LOOKING BACK

- February 19—Lord Pethick-Lawrence's announcement in House of Lords.
- March 15—Premier Attlee's statement.
- March 24—Cabinet Delegation arrive in Delhi.
- March 25—Delegation hold first Press conference.
- April 3—Delegation meet Gandhiji and Maulana Azad.
- April 4—Delegation meet Mr. Jinnah.
- April 4—Jinnah-Tara Singh meeting.
- April 7—League Legislators' Convention meets.
- April 19—Mission leave for Kashmir for Easter recess.
- April 23—Ex-President Hoover of America arrives in Delhi.
- April 27—League and Congress invited for joint discussions at Simla.
- May 5—Tripartite Conference opens at Simla.
- May 12—Simla Conference's failure announced.
- May 16—Statement embodying Delegation's proposals published.
- May 16—Lord Pethick-Lawrence's broadcast.
- May 17—Broadcasts by the Viceroy and C. in C.
- May 18—Simla Conference correspondence released.
- May 22—Delegation's statement on Paramountcy.
- May 22—Jinnah's reactions to Delegation's Proposals.
- May 24—Congress Working Committee raises objections.
- May 25—Delegation answers League and Congress objections
- June 6—League accepts Proposals.
- June 10—Princes accept Proposals.
- June 11—States people formulate demands.
- June 14—Conditional rejection of Proposals by Congress.

